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Editorial

RELIGION AND EDUCATION
A Philosophical Appraisal

"We are born human; but we become human." That is, although physically all of us are born human, socially and culturally we have to become human beings through an arduous and lifelong process carried out within the human community. In fact, this becoming process cannot have a preset end, by the attainment of which the process can be halted or brought to an end. In spite of being an unending process, strategically, life should have proximate ends which we shall approach and realize individually and collectively through persistent and concerted efforts. It has to take into account not only the training of the intellect but also the will of human beings, as they have to balance and integrate the operations of these two vital faculties if they were to achieve a *humane* development. Therefore, the educative process that begins even before we are born forms and transforms us into beings that have a sense of meaning and value in life.

Education[1] is the most important means that initiates a multifarious process of humanizing which has been in vogue from the very beginning of human existence. In general, education involves imparting or acquiring knowledge through which the distinctive powers of reasoning and judgment could be developed, thus, intellectually and integrally preparing human beings to achieve maturity in life. According to S. Radhakrishnan, "the true aim of education should be the production of individuals harmonious in character and creative in spirit."[2] Maharishi Mahesh Yogi articulates it further in his famous book, *Science of Being and Art of Living*:

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[1]The verb "educate," deriving from the Latin root *educare* (which is from *ex-*, "out" and *dūcere*, "lead"), means "to rear," "to bring up," to instruct," and "to lead forth," and thus stands for training any person "so as to develop the intellectual and moral powers," or "to train, discipline so as to develop some special aptitude, taste, or disposition." Education, as a process, includes both "the systematic instruction … given to the young [and adult] in preparation for … life" and a "culture or development of powers, formation of character, as contrasted with the imparting of mere knowledge or skill." *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd Edition (1989), s.v. "educate" and "education."

[2]S. Radhakrishnan, *India and China*, Bombay: Hind Kitabs, 1944, 54.

> Education aims at culturing the mind of a man to enable him to accomplish all he would like to accomplish in the great field of life. Education should necessarily enable a man to make use of his full potential in the field of his body, mind, and spirit. But it should also develop him in the ability to make the best use of his personality, surroundings, and circumstances so that he may accomplish the maximum in life for himself and for all others.[3]

Thus, whatever is the method of education adopted by one person or a society, it must be capable of helping them derive those values, goals, and direction that are proper to the socialisation of human beings. Moreover, it should facilitate understanding each one's inner self, potentialities, and possible horizons of development so that he or she could be properly prepared to face the challenges in life and make the best out of life.

Education, whether carried out at home or in an institutional setting, has the potential to mould the minds by way of imparting the core values that have been accepted and acknowledged by the society at large over a long period of time. Education becomes creative of the human spirit if it frees individuals and societies to re-create existing values into more harmonious configuration of life. It shall, however, not envisage a slavish style of adaptation, which will only tend to curtail the human spirit and ingenuity. The ability of those who undergo education to think for themselves, to imagine and to be creative, and, thus, to identify the importance of the values inculcated must be respected and enhanced at all levels. It will result in a healthy and spontaneous acceptance or rejection of the values, paving the way for the development of a mature and vibrant culture or civilization. Thus, education shall be identified as the cornerstone of a civilization, and shall be approached with the uncompromising seriousness that it deserves as the soul of *humane* advance.

In fact, education is capable of initiating processes that may lead either to healthy development of individuals and societies, or to subversive and violent turn of events. History is witness to the fact that many a violent conflict has been initiated by subversive processes of education, and had been instrumental in destabilising thriving cultures and civilizations. However, it shall also be recalled that educative processes

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[3]Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *Science of Being and Art of Living: Transcendental Meditation*, New York: Meridian, 1995, 208.

have been powerful enough to heal the political and cultural wounds caused by violent overtures – just or unjust – and political uprisings. It is obvious from the previous statements that education as a process can be both creative and destructive at the same time. Assuming that most of the educative endeavours are creative (especially, as it is also possible to transform even a subversive method of education into an ingenious resource for the development of humanity), we shall dwell on the contemporary scene of education, with the goal of highlighting certain positive dimensions that seem to be missing from the models adopted at various levels of institutionalized educative procedures.

Education provides us with a chance to immerse ourselves in distilled *anemnesis* (meaning "memory") and to the dynamic *poiéō* (meaning "to create anew, make, do")[4] by joining the dynamic effects of human freedom to settled culture. The dynamic nature of the process would vary from mild to drastic transformations. It calls for an integration of the riches of the past, creativity of the present, and possibilities of the future. The success of a generation will depend, to a great extend, on its ability to weave together these triple dimensions of human existence consciously and integrally. A civilization will be acclaimed by the later ones only to the extend it has the sagacity to leap above its own trivialities by having its firm foundations on the time-tested values bequeathed from the past, but at the same time determined to keep the wider horizons of the future as hope and reality at the same time. In short, the future, or

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[4]The two terms here have their inspiration from the quote of Radhakrishnan, where he proposes "production of individuals harmonious in character and creative in spirit" as the aim of education. See S. Radhakrishnan, *India and China*, 54. But, he does not use the Greek terms. Notice that *anámnēsis* is used in the nominative sense, due to the distilled character of whatever the humanity has achieved through the sedimenting nature of every instance of cultural and civilizational past, however perennial a certain culture may value its own "truths" and customs. The concept of *poiéō* is used here in the verbal sense, since it is an educative inculcation of ever-wiser possibilities (future) into the present by forcing possible futures into the present. In short, *poiéō* integrates all the three tenses of human advancement in the spiritual fruits of well-rounded education. It is an on-going process and, hence, partially free. All would agree that the most priced joy and wealth of a teacher (in a wider sense) is in freeing oneself and the students (in the general sense) to witness greater freedoms being kneaded by their private dough, with the admixture of lots and lots of other dough! This is an ongoing process. (I am grateful to Raphael Neelamkavil for suggesting the rich nuances of the Greek expressions used)

realization of the projected possibilities, shall be the hallmark of relevance of any machinery of education.

Education for civilization must have as its integral part an education for philosophizing. Each member of the human race must be enabled to think for himself/herself. Each one must be enabled to initiate a process of ever-enhancing rationale for life and its activities. Openness to the unseen horizons could be facilitated only when humanity is ready to look beyond the past and the present designs: an openness that calls for a readiness to part with the past and the present, a readiness to see through the future, and to recognize the superiority of the posterity to which one has contributed but a little! This will be realized only if each member of humanity is enabled to stand on his/her own feet; it is not a call for rejecting the rich traditions and valued customs; but certainly it envisions the ability on the part of individuals to look beyond what the human civilizations have achieved so far, a courageous but meaningful leap to the unknown, having firm faith in humanity's capacity to bring forth ever fresh and new dimensions to life in its ideal fullness. Though philosophy is largely understood in terms of its logical application, the philosophizing referred to here shall be understood more along a holistic line.[5] This shall obviously involve all human powers such as thinking, feeling, intuiting (including the spiritual or mystical intuition), etc., all rolled into one. Education to holism by bestowing self-enhancing philosophizing to the individual (which is at the same time other-enhancing) is, perhaps, the intellectual and potentially actualizing summit of any system of education.

At this stage it must be made clear that by education we do not mean mere classroom teaching and learning, although it is an important part of it. To educate, in its real sense, does not mean merely to transmit some skeletal information about one or the other subject from teacher to the students; it is neither merely learning from books, nor memorising some facts. Education must result in changing the inner person; every educational institution – if it is true to its primary task of advancing the humanity beyond distilled *anámnēsis* via dynamic *poiéō* into actualization

[5]A statement by Pope John Paul II is pertinent here. He states: "Men and women have at their disposal an array of resources for generating greater knowledge of truth so that their lives may be ever more human. Among these is philosophy, which is directly concerned with asking the question of life's meaning and sketching an answer to it. Philosophy emerges, then, as one of the noblest of human tasks." Pope John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* (Encyclical Letter), §3.

of wise possibilities – should bring forth a new humanity through every individual trained in it. The lessons imparted in any educative setting must enable the students to transform their own perspectives or viewpoints. This is creative advance of humanity initiated through education. Wrote Ellen Key in 1900: "Our age cries for personality, but it will ask in vain, until we allow them to have their own will, think their own thoughts, work out their own knowledge, form their own judgments..."[6] This calls for an extraordinarily critical mind and a capacity on the part of the students to observe, look, or listen for themselves, and thus to form their own judgments. Of course, this runs the risk of deviations and wrong judgments, and a consequent embracing of error instead of truth. Here we identify the relevance of teachers, who shall not only initiate the process of learning, but must be capable of guiding the students on the right path of judgment; it shall, however, not be carried out merely by resorting to age old rules and readymade formulations of civil law and religious dogmas, but through an arduous process of critical and creative thinking that would enable each individual to tread on the right path through the light of his or her own intellect and will. "The Declaration on Christian Education," issued by Vatican Council II, envisages the same goal for school and collegiate education:

> ... children and young people must be helped, with the aid of the latest advances in psychology and the arts and science of teaching, to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual endowments so that they may gradually acquire a mature sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and constancy.[7]

From this perspective, education, especially the process of learning, becomes most effective when students live and learn in an atmosphere of freedom within which they are facilitated to discover truth for themselves, rather than being indoctrinated by the system, teachers being the last link in that structural chain.

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[6]Ellen Key, *The Century of the Child*, 232, cited in Thorbjorn Lengborn, "Ellen Key," in Zaghloul Morsy, ed., *Thinkers on Education*, Oxford: Oxford University, 1997, 2:833.

[7]Vatican Council II, "Declaration on Christian Education," §1.

Education is not a system conceived to inculcate intellectual bondage. Whenever a system of education tends to imprison the human spirit by way of inflexible indoctrination, it does a disservice to humanity.

> Our education must not do anything to break the human spirit. In the name of education, we spoil human creativeness, and choke up the springs of wisdom. The great teacher may explain to his pupil the best that has been thought and said, but must leave it to the pupil to think and decide for himself.[8]

It is the sad plight of our society that the curriculum and the method of teaching adopted by many institutions foster a spirit of inordinate uniformity in thinking disregarding the uniqueness of individual students to a great extent. It is high-time that the avenues of education, especially at the early stages, were open to the ingenuity and uniqueness of each student; this would necessarily call for flexibility in the possibilities of customizing the programme of studies. However, given the present scenario of most of the schools in India, especially with a low teacher ratio, making room for individual attention does not seem to be a possibility in any near future, let alone the provisions for student inventiveness in the classroom settings. Indeed, this situation necessitates the complementing mechanism between school and home. While the schools may not be in a position to cater to the individual differences among students, parents and other members at home do have a decisive role in providing for such differences, and in positively enabling them to perfect their talents and special interests. If such a procedure is adopted and cooperation between school and home is achieved, we will succeed in bringing forth many young persons who are harmonious in character, integral in values, and creative in spirit.

Human creativity should be catered to at every step of education. This is especially so because of the human vocation. According to Rabindranath Tagore, a great educationist with a noble vision for a transformed humanity, physical evolution and aggrandizement have

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[8]Radhakrishnan, *India and China*, 58; see also Radhakrishnan, *Kalki, or the Future of Civilization*, London: Kegan Paul, 1929, 36: "Our education has not freed us from intellectual bondage. It stimulates the mind without satisfying it. We read poetry, devour fiction, and attend the movies; and think we are cultured. Our rationality is a pretence. We use reason to bolster up our instincts. We invent excuses for what we want to do and set forth arguments for what we want to believe."

already come to its climax in human beings.[9] This, however, does not mean that evolution and further enhancements have come to an abrupt halt. Human beings, who are endowed with the unique faculty of imagination, have a noble task and an uncompromising responsibility to consciously involve in the further processes of growth by exercising their free choice. As freedom is the birthright of human beings – by virtue of the faculty of reason and imagination that enables them to soar to the highest levels of reality – they take it upon themselves to responsibly transform the very human existence: though partaking in matter their nature is self-conscious; though sharing in the characteristics of animals, they are endowed with the capacity to act against the instincts; though rational, they are enabled to *imagine* the supernatural and reach up to it through their relentless attempts. In fact, it is from this perspective that Immanuel Kant, a philosopher and educationist from the 18th century proposes that children must not be educated simply to achieve the present levels of intelligence, but should aim at the possible better future levels.[10] Such a higher level projected for realization in the educative process will certainly make a student invest the utmost of his or her energies, contributing to the growth and advancement of the individual and the humanity. As Radhakrishnan puts it, "all the great achievements of man in art and architecture, in philosophy and religion, in science and technology, have been due not to the man who has been a slave of his environment but to one who has been a master of his environment and who has been able, therefore, to recast his environment in the manner that he has chosen."[11] This is a clarion call to everyone not to be the slave of the present standards or the victim of the given environment; each one must approach the horizons of life with ingenuity and farsightedness. For, the standard that we set in education

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[9]Rabindranath Tagore, "Soul consciousness," *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore: Plays, Stories, and Essays*, Sisir Kumar Das, ed., New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1996, 2: 291-92.

[10]Immanuel Kant, *Handbook of the Art of Education*, 14, cited in Heinrich Kanz, "Immanuel Kant," in Zaghloul Morsy, ed., *Thinkers on Education*, Oxford: Oxford University, 1997, 2: 794.

[11]S. Radhakrishnan, *President Radhakrishnan's Speeches and Writings*, New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1969, 2: 260.

will set the limits of human achievement for the individual, for the nation, and for the human race as a whole.[12]

The programme of education must have provisions for self-knowledge and self-realization, initiation for which shall be given in the family setup itself. Primarily, this warrants that students must be led to objectively understand their own potentialities and the prospects. As Socrates has rightly put it, knowing oneself is the greatest learning that one can attain. Proper self-knowledge and objective assessment of oneself would convince a person of the need to learn unceasingly. A programme of education should, therefore, supplement the possible familial deficiencies in the bestowal of emotional intelligence in the student. J. Krishnamurti opines: "You can only learn when [you know that] you do not know."[13] Of course, providing such an insight into oneself requires an arduous task on the part of each individual as well as on the part of all those who initiate him or her into the art of human living. A deeper understanding of oneself can be facilitated not merely through textbook learning or objective sciences. Without belittling their relevance, it must be emphasized that proper guidance – through personal prayer, meditation, yoga, counselling assistance, etc., and, in general, through magnanimous inquisitiveness and earnestness on the part of the educators – has to be made available to the students so that they will experience the inner dimensions of themselves, and enkindle their own hidden energies, thus, bringing forth their own selves which would otherwise remain latent and naïve for ever. In fact, the right kind of education must have provisions

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[12]This is a challenging situation for school and university education. Over the years, although the human race as a whole has advanced quite a lot in the acquisition of information and its application in multifaceted fields, in general, the standards of evaluation have remained the same. As the minimum for a pass grade in school finals and university examinations has been retained at 35% (or even less in certain cases), a good number of students have been contended to remain at the mediocre levels. Without disregarding the individual variations in human capabilities, on the one hand, and the excellence manifested in specialised fields of education, on the other, it is high-time that the responsible agencies involved in deciding the modalities of examination and evaluation took their job seriously, and make sufficient changes in terms of setting a higher standard as the minimum (or pass grade) so as to motivate our youngsters to invest their optimum and reap its fruits by way of an enriched personal life and an enhanced state of human species.

[13]J. Krishnamurti, *On Education*, Madras: Krishnamurti Foundation India, 1989, 53.

for cultivating the whole person and the totality of the mind, both of which should take into account the inner dimensions of the person. What we shall look forward in education is not the mere mechanisation of the human mind, but letting the inner core of the person to blossom by providing the right ambience and incentives in order to peak and fruition even without facilitating agents.

The role of teachers is unparalleled in the field of education and in the development of a civilization. The task entrusted with the teachers is a tremendous one, as they "have a great deal to do with the shaping of the minds and hearts of our youth."[14] Teachers are not task masters; instead, they are the animators of human creativity, the facilitators of human spirit, and the instructors in the art and science of humanizing. Therefore, we are in need of a host of teachers who are committed to initiate others into the vast sea of knowledge and wisdom. They will be effective instruments of education only if their commitment to and faith in the future of humanity are affirmative and optimistic. Teachers, therefore, should cultivate a love for human creativity, coupled with a critical attitude on the past, dynamically creative response to the present, and an optimistic outlook on the future.

In a world of "information explosion" it is impossible for any one to keep track of or to cope with the inflow of information. This is applicable in the case of teachers as well. Today no teacher will be capable of being informed about every development that takes place in different parts of the world. Indeed, every teacher must try his or her level best to get personally equipped with the advances in the field of specialisation. However, far more important on the part of the teachers is to keep themselves open to the ever new and widening horizons of human knowledge – even from among their students – so that they will never be redundant and obstructive in disseminating knowledge and wisdom among the students who are ever in search of them. Therefore, it is not the depth and breadth of the content of education handled by the teachers that become most important, but the methodologies that they adopt in reaching out to the students at different levels in their development and specialisation. It must also be stated that the information inflow in every

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[14]Radhakrishnan, *Speeches and Writings*, 2: 202. Radhakrishnan has stated elsewhere: "Magnificent buildings and equipment are no substitute for a great teacher." *Speeches and Writings*, 2: 104.

field calls for continued specialisation (i.e., regarding the content) and a professional approach (i.e., regarding the methodology) in dealing with the needs of students and issues emerging from teaching or student research: they have to remain incessant seekers for ever. Moreover, in order to re-tune and re-equip the teaching faculty in any institutional setup, crucially important are the highly qualitative training programmes for the future teachers, and in-service programmes for the ongoing updating and development of those who are already teachers. The updating programmes will naturally enhance teachers' ability to respond and contribute to the proper development of an educational strategy, which has to be constantly revised taking into account the tremendous and fast-paced changes that take place in our society.

It is the need of the society that the best minds are attracted to the teaching profession, as they are the key resources in developing personalities and cultures. As a World Bank study has stated, "the terms and conditions of teachers' employment are important because they determine, to a large extent, the quality of candidates attracted to the profession."[15] Our societies have been highly motivated by monetary or economic benefits, and there is high demand for highly talented persons in many high-profile industries. In such a context, it is saddening to note that there is great difficulty to get the best minds in the field of education. Given this situation, it shall be a concern of every society, especially of the state, to evolve strategies to encourage and build up an excellent teaching force for the nation; if not, the future will be very bleak. At this juncture, it shall also be noted that we should not be unmindful of the present economic scenario. The state has a responsibility to see to it that the remuneration paid to the teachers – both in the public and private sectors – is on par with, or even better than, the payments received by other professionals. It will additionally motivate highly talented persons to remain in the field of education and train the younger generations along the line of greater intellectual and cultural achievements, thus enhancing the prospects of our human society at large.

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[15]Cathy Gaynor, *Decentralization of Education: Teacher Management*, Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1998, 25. The same study notes elsewhere: "Low salaries discourage qualified people from entering the teaching profession and give those who do little incentive to improve their teaching." Gaynor, *Decentralization of Education*, 25.

In this context, when we take stock of the present educational institutional scenario everything does not fit into the ideal. Although education has to aim at the attainment of a culture or the evolution of a civilization by nurturing the latent potentialities among the students, most of the agencies and participants involved in education seem to be driven by free market economy. The triumph of capitalism in the form of globalization and its mesmerising powers, have made tremendous impact on the modern human psyche to such an extent that right and wrong are largely determined in terms of the profit or the advantage one draws from any activity, including education. From this perspective, education is also treated as one of the commodities sold in the market, and the relationship between teacher and student, or among the various agencies involved, is understood in terms of business. That is, those who impart education – both the institutions and the service personnel – become part of the selling mechanism, and the students who benefit through the entire gamut of services are the customers.[16] Indeed, of late, the tendency is to locate the active involvement of the "free market" theory even in education, making it much more vulnerable to the market forces, and degrading and dethroning it from the nobler status that education enjoyed in the hitherto history of humanity. Positively, this understanding of education would bring about better accountability to students (as consumers) and an understanding of reward based on merit and performance. Furthermore, the involvement of parents in education becomes a key factor, as for most of the education parents/guardians take upon themselves the burden of payment – either in the form of direct payment of fees or as taxpayers to the government. Parents, thus, become the stakeholders in the system of education, and rightly demand better results from their wards.

Another development along this line is the dominance of career orientation both among parents and students, and hence, naturally within the educational institutions. There is no argument against training every

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[16]The following passage from an international study is revealing: "Educational decentralization usually implies a shift in the way in which teachers and parents relate to each other. Many countries are still struggling to cope with the new role of parents as active stakeholders in education. Parent-teacher relations are most profoundly affected in decentralization programs that have a strong market focus. In Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, parents are now seen as consumers, and teachers are held accountable to them as providers of education..." Gaynor, *Decentralization of Education*, 47-48.

student to be a productive person in the society. Indeed, educational programme should have such orientations as well. However, the sad plight of the present education system is that it orientates exclusively in enabling the youngsters to meet one or other need of the industry. Development is understood in a very narrow sense, where the ultimate aim is the enhancement of certain capabilities with which one person would be able to perform a particular task, of course, in its best possible manner. In this process of enabling them for such a specialised task, unfortunately, the basic vision of education as the development of the total person is lost sight of.

When the entire programme of education is tuned to the needs of the market, students tend to miss one or the other vital dimension of life, a serious lapse that will adversely affect the humanity with dreadful and lasting consequences. For example, the Information Technology (IT) which is the most lucrative field of employment today looks for youngsters who are excellent and innovative in IT-related applications. In order to excel in such fields many a student tends to be glued to the computers and related machines, as a result of which even familial relations and socialisation are affected to a psychologically and socially debilitating extent. The same is true with regard to other professions associated with high social status, such as medicine and engineering. As the education field has turned out to be very competitive, both the students and the parents are desperately trying to get into those specialised training institutes that can assure a definite entry into the well-placed higher education institutions. Indeed, as the available seats are very limited, what happens is, at a very early stage in the development, these youngsters are force-fed with selected information, so that they are equipped to come through the competitive examinations. It is, indeed, commendable that many do it extremely well, but at a very high cost. It is not the monetary cost that I am referring to, but the shortcomings incurred by the training programme itself. By and large, it is being observed that an overstress on career-related subjects at a very early stage withholds different vital aspects of life, usually covered by the humanities (i.e., philosophy, theology, literature, history, etc.) and other value inculcating subjects, which are essential for the *humane* development of these youngsters.[17]

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[17]See how prophetic is the statement of S. Radhakrishnan: "Any satisfactory system of education should aim at a balanced growth of the individual and insist on

In fact, culture or civilization that evolves from human living is not a one time product; it is created anew by different generations through their creative involvement. Such a process can be triggered only by educating the youth for creative involvement in the society by abiding to the value systems. In order to facilitate it, education must include history and classics. For, they are not merely guardians of the past; they are, in fact, the instruments to herald a bright future. Of late, however, many lament that a sense of values is being lost in the craze for professional education and money minting careers. Sharing in the riches of globalization in the big Indian cities (which is reflected even in small towns), for example, does not seem to stop with the spiralling growth rate and economic boom, but greatly results in a moral decadence, although sufficient scientific data to back up a direct relationship between these two are still lacking.

Further, an unhealthy competitive spirit that is inculcated by the industry, the parents, and the educational institutions seems to be damaging the riches of childhood and the spirit of cooperation, both of which contribute towards humanizing and civilization. Ideally speaking, education shall not cater to egoism, but to promote and practise altruism. However, given the present situation of the market-driven educational endeavours, building up an altruistic society seems to be a mirage. Therefore, being realistic, what we shall strive for is the healthy development of a person in terms of a balance between such extremes, egoism and altruism. Although the ideal of harmony may not be realized in every case, the system of education, especially educators, must deliberately strive for the same in a realistic manner. As this cannot be facilitated merely by the setup of educational institutions, a holistic cooperation between the home and school/college is essential.

Another domain that can make lasting contributions on education, especially by way of imparting a creative outlook on life, is religion. As most religions impart a positive world view among their members by accompanying them at every stage in life, the gradual process of education and the outlook imparted by it on individuals can be influenced by religion

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both knowledge and wisdom... It should not only train the intellect but bring grace into the heart of man. Wisdom is more easily gained through the study of literature, philosophy, religion. They interpret the higher laws of the universe. If we do not have a general philosophy or attitude of life, our minds will be confused, and we will suffer from greed, pusillanimity, anxiety, and defeatism. Mental slums are more dangerous to mankind than material slums." *Speeches and Writings*, 1: 102.

– both as a way of life and as an institution. The delicate balancing of egoism and altruism, for example, can be communicated by educators, but can be effectively facilitated and supported by religious ideals and proven methods practised by many faithful adherents of any particular religion. The religion-education combine will succeed in cultivating a sense of interdependence (a practice emerging from the value of altruism) among individuals. They have to be aware of the fact that society is not merely a collection of individuals, but a coming together of human persons who are ready to mutually share the powers and resources for the welfare of all; interdependence among human beings is the most inspiring form of mutuality. It is not an artificial addition to human nature, but an expression of the inherent structure of humanity itself. Humanity evolves not in individual isolation, but in the community of human beings, religion being its most sublime expression.

It is interesting to note that both religion and education share a common goal of enabling and ennobling individual human beings in varied circumstances, especially in their vicissitudes of life, and in making the best out of them by employing all available means. Both have the goal of attaining fullness of human life, though the means employed are different. In fact, they are effective instruments in supporting and augmenting both nature and nurture, the given and the hoped for. The cooperative activity of these two domains, therefore, can positively contribute to the enhancement of human life at every stage of its development. The ideal in this context is a constant exchange or dialogue between religion and education so as to constantly evolve effective methods in achieving their goals. Indeed, our society witnesses the constructive effects of merging religion and education in the case of a lot of institutions, and they have been the stalwarts in heralding a renewed humanity. From time immemorial, history testifies to the power of many a religious educational institution, from village schools to large universities, as they have been instrumental in dawning and sustaining civilizations.

In history, however, we come across with instances where either religion exploits education for its own vested interests, or education misuses religion for realizing certain unbecoming motives. In both cases, however, these abuses have been initiated and their results have been plundered by the institutional forms of religion and education. Just as they can be a massive force for positive action when they affirmatively involve in the affairs of humanity, they can be destructive forces with the same

might, which would ultimately be dangerous to the cause of humanity. The best tie up resulting in creativity may turn out to be the worst, once the intentions are manipulated and the goals have been vitiated. If religion can be taken to stand for integration, and education for the attainment of knowledge, a statement by Samuel Johnson, implying the necessity of their coexistence and cooperation, is quite telling: "Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful."[18]

Education, especially in the Indian context, has to adopt a trans-religious approach, where without denying religion or religious practice, space is made for knowing and appreciating other religions, with their diverse perspectives and practices. While making room for religion within education the latter must be freed from the clutches of unhealthy (institutionalized) 'religious' elements.

If education and religion should cooperate for the good of humanity, as I have claimed in the preceding paragraphs, one area that needs special attention is that of social justice. While every religion purports to practise and promote social justice and every educational institution instructs its wards in the principles of the same justice, they have to work hand-in-hand in order to achieve a lasting solution for the instances of injustice that prevail in our society. The tremendous potential of these institutions have to be employed in inculcating a right sense of justice (including an understanding of both equality and equity) in every individual person: this shall be the first step to build up a just society. As a Chinese proverb goes, "If there be righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character; if there be beauty in character, there will be harmony in the home; if there be harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation; if there be order in the nation, there will be peace and harmony in the world." This ideal, however, seems to be far removed from the contemporary educational scene in India. A critique on the recent pro- and anti-reservation agitation that had stirred up controversies among the educational institutions in India is indicative of the negative and counter-productive education imparted, at least as far as a sense of equity is concerned. It is unfortunate to note that, by and large, both the media and the educators are attempting to politicise the issue, thus scuttling the very idea of justice, and denying

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[18]Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas*, chapter 41 (1759), cited in W. Jay Wood, *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous*, Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1998, 58.

rightful opportunities to those deserving students from the underprivileged classes, whose present lot has resulted from the anti-social impacts of the practice of caste system over a period of thousands of years. The negative role played by the politicians, in particular, and some educators, in general, is still appalling: though they are expected to be standing for the uplift of the downtrodden – as a democratic society, at least in Gandhian understanding, should have equal opportunities for the poor and oppressed[19] – what we witness is a high-profiled drama for exploiting the sensitive vote banks of the nation. Are these politicians and educators interested in the betterment of the people of the adversely affected classes? Are they envisaging the development of the nation, and the uplift of its people? Or, are they merely concerned about the aggrandizement of their political clout and strategic manoeuvring as the pathway to justice? Further, can we consider the students who resort to violent means to stop every step in the direction of equity for the downtrodden properly educated?

The single issue of social justice that we have taken up for scrutiny is indicative of the direction that the contemporary education scene is heading for. It presents us with an alarming situation: if it cannot be checked, it can destabilise a nation which is already facing many other subversive elements. It is high-time that all the involved parties – especially educational institutions, heads of various religions, and the state and central governments – cooperate in evolving an effective strategy to properly educate the younger generations, so that we can be optimistic about a creatively emerging India which will not only boast about the bygone glorious epochs, but will consciously participate in creating a life affirmative, cooperative, and cosmopolitan civilization within which everybody else can join and participate.

The complex dynamics involved in the interaction between religion and education, some of which have been introduced in the preceding discussion, have prompted *Journal of Dharma* to initiate a scholarly discussion on "Religion and Education." Selection of this theme is also motivated by the fact that Dharmaram College, under the patronage of which functions Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, a Pontifical Athenaeum of Philosophy, Theology, Canon Law, and Spirituality and Counselling (under whose auspices *Journal of Dharma* is established), celebrates its

[19]M. K. Gandhi, *Harijan*, 17-11-1946, 404.

golden jubilee in the year 2006-2007. Dharmaram College (Bangalore, India) was originally established to provide theological education to young Catholic men with the intention of training Catholic priests and Christian leaders.[20] In course of time, however, its horizons were opened up to the needs of the people of Bangalore, thus, initiating various educational endeavours on and off the campus, a move that has now become a mark of quality education under the leadership of Christ College (Autonomous). As per the statistics available this year, Dharmaram College reaches out to more than 15000 students on a daily basis, and the courses offered range from pre-primary education to doctoral studies in specialised subjects. It shall be a matter of pride for Christians in India, in general, and the members of the religious congregation Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI), in particular, that over last 50 years, Dharmaram College, in and through all its allied and affiliated institutions, has moulded a myriad of good citizens, educators, scientists, social workers, etc., from the secular perspective, and a galaxy of well-motivated Christian priests, religious, and missionaries who continue to stand in good stead in the multi-faceted fields of Christian service carried out both within and outside India. It must also be said that Dharmaram has taken the lead in initiating positive steps in inculcating a healthy approach towards different religions, cultures, and linguistic groups. Many who have passed out of this institute have changed batons with the succeeding generations in the field of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue and harmony. The success of "Dharmaram-style education" could also be attributed to her ability to integrate nature with nurture, the human with the divine, the secular with the religious, and the profane with the sacred. It enables each of her wards to be human beings thoroughly rooted in their own culture and tradition, but at the same time transcending their bounds and boundaries to share the riches of our common human destiny and to reach out to the unseen and

[20]The vision enshrined in the Gospels, and later articulated in the "Declaration on Christian Education," has been very much part of the legacy of Dharmaram: "to make a more penetrating inquiry into the various aspects of the sacred science so that an ever deepening understanding of Sacred Revelation is obtained, the legacy of Christian wisdom handed down by our forefathers is more fully developed, the dialogue with our separated brethren and with non-Christians is fostered, and answers are given to questions arising from the development of doctrine." Vatican Council II, "Declaration on Christian Education," §11.

unexplored horizons, thus, constituting the supreme wisdom as the ultimate aim of education.[21]

Among the entries in this issue of the *Journal of Dharma*, "Education and Concern for the Marginalized" by Thomas Menaparampil, the Archbishop of Guwahati, initiates a detailed discussion on the social responsibility of the Church in India to involve in the field of education with a motive to reach out to the poor, downtrodden, and the marginalized. A Christian perspective of education, argues Menamparampil, stands firmly against "producing human machines to serve the market." Again, he insists: "While mobilizing resources is necessary for education, commercialization of education is degrading. While there is a place for competition and search for success in everyone's life, there is also room for cooperation and sharing... Quality education should not mean producing snobs, parasites, and exploiters of their own fellow-beings, but leaders committed to the welfare of society." A realistic evaluation of some of the educational institutions run by the Catholics convinces Menamparampil to call upon those educators to become inspirers and motivators who can finally realize the Christian dream of universal education.

In the second article, Maja Milčinski delves on the necessity of educators acquiring spiritual experience so that they can impart an "Education beyond Rationality," which, according to her, should be an essential dimension of contemporary education. She asks pointedly: "What kind of education are we able to transmit to the children if we ourselves do not engage in some kind of spiritual training which would enable us to embrace life in all its manifestations and provide us with necessary flexibility for survival and growth through various crises, setbacks, illnesses, etc., which represent important tests of our daily living?" Taking cue from Buddhism and Daoism, Milčinski proposes inculcation of spiritual values through non-verbal means, including meditation. She provides an interpretation of a diagram from Chinese spiritual topography in order to

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[21]The motto of Dharmaram College is "*Īśabhakti paraṁjñānam*," literally meaning "devotion to the Lord is Supreme Wisdom." According to this noble vision, Dharmaram College "pays constant attention to the spiritual values to be cultivated by the students, as well as to a thorough and profound intellectual discipline to be acquired by them through *Īśabhakti* (devotion to the Lord) and its ever flowing *paraṁjñānam* (knowledge par excellence), leading them to an integral transformation." *Directory of Dharmaram College 2003-04*, inside cover page.

provide a trans-rational representation of the Truth and education in it. As an alternative, Milčinski proposes an approach of self-cultivation based on the mind's direct intuitive grasp of the proper Way.

The following three articles from three eminent Indian theologians, Jesudason Baskar Jeyaraj, Sebastian Periannan, and Anto Amarnad, approach the issue of higher education and faith education from different viewpoints. While Jeyaraj presents inter-faith relations as an essential ingredient of transformation achieved through higher education and the ideal role of religious educational institutions to be the active agents of transformation, Periannan articulates the methods of communication that should be employed in order to attain effective education in the institutions of higher learning. In an attempt to explicate the integral nature of religion and education from the perspective of individual and social development, Amarnad proposes that "until one's faith and learning process contribute substantially for bringing up a rich behavioural transformation and self-direction both religion and education will remain inadequate and will lose their prime purpose in human life." He positively affirms that our strides shall be supported and enhanced by "the self-directing grace of religion and liberating light of education."

In an attempt to portray the prophetic vision of an educationist from the 19th century Kerala, Sunny Punneliparambil unveils the educational charisma of Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the co-founder of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI). With the basic vision that through the process of education "we should aim the integral wellbeing of the humankind, by contributing to the development of true human culture," Punneliparambil establishes that, for Chavara, education has to "enable everyone to take part in the mainstream social and cultural life of the land by imbibing a sense of equality and social equity." The success formula of Chavara consisted in bequeathing a method of education consisting of down-to-earth practical measures to empower the members of the society, especially the marginalized, with esteem and integrity.

Education is the right and duty of the human race: no one shall be left out of the avenues of education, so that everyone one will consciously partake in the process of humanizing and the development of mature and vibrant civilization: true education happens when that process is carried out in an atmosphere of freedom of mind. Further, no individual or movement shall try to subvert the educational processes for vested interests; not even a democratic government shall try to manipulate the

programme of education (by way of a politically motivated syllabus selection, or promoting only those who have allegiance to a particular ideology, for example) to serve its *vested* interests of the ruling political party. The same principle should be applicable to university or higher education, where in the curriculum planning, faculty selection, and appointments to high academic offices political pressures must be warded off. Scholars and scientists will be creatively contributing to the enhancement of human culture only when they function with immunity from the fluctuations of bureaucratic setup and mass influences. In fact, all universities, and other institutions of the same stature, should enjoy autonomy, so that quality education and cultural enhancement will be facilitated among the members of our society.

Education is the cornerstone of humanity and civilization. It must, therefore, receive the utmost attention from the society, especially from the authorities. Providing education for all is an inherent and uncompromising duty of the state; indeed, it is the birthright of every human being in order to augment the process of humanization. The content, the method, and the agencies in relation to the education imparted are to be given a proper vision in terms of leading all human beings to the fullness of life, by animating them to bring out their latent potentialities. As the human beings, the society, and the civilization continue to evolve, the process of education must also have a continual process of change at every level. Then, the educational institutions will be able to respond to the needs of the students in the best possible manner, responding to the needs of particular times and particular peoples, without losing their universal perspective.

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EDUCATION AND CONCERN FOR THE MARGINALIZED

Thomas Menamparampil♦

1. Introduction

There are a few stunning bits of information on education in India that will put the entire matter under discussion in a proper perspective:

- About half of India's children between ages six and fourteen (82.2 million) are not in school. They stay at home to care for cattle, tend younger children, collect firewood, or work in the fields, tea stalls, or restaurants.[1]
- India has approximately half of world's illiterates. Most children who start school drop out.
- Child labour in India number from 13.6 million to 44 million or more.[2]
- Many countries in Africa, with income levels lower than India, have expanded mass education with impressive increase in literacy.[3]
- Among the groups who get little and low quality education are dalits and tribals.
- Only 1% of the girls in villages who go to school move up to class XII.[4]

♦**Thomas Menaparampil**, the Archbishop of Guwahati, has authored numerous articles on education, culture, pluralism, and religion. He had been an educator for over quarter of a century, before he was appointed bishop of Dibrugarh in 1981. From 1992 he heads the Archdiocese of Guwahati.

[1]See Myron Weiner, *The Child and the State in India: Child Labour and Education Policy in Comparative Perspective*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, 3, 13, 16.

[2]"Of those who enter the first grade, only four out of ten complete four years of school." Weiner, *The Child and the State in India*, 3. Madhavrao Scindia said in 1995 that 77% of the tribal students dropped out (*Times of India*, 1.4.95). Further, he suggested that there should be no detention till class VIII (*Times of India*, 5.4.95).

[3]"Botswana, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion, Rwanda, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe have literacy rates in the 50 per cent to 75 per cent range." Weiner, *The Child and the State in India*, 4.

[4]Weiner, *The Child and the State in India*, 3-4.

After listing and discussing some of the issues listed above, Myron Weiner comments that despite impressive official rhetoric in favour of universal literacy, there is *no political will* to make this goal come true. He notices shocking apathy and indifference among all sections of people: government officials, social activists, trade unionists, social researchers, religious leaders, party workers, educationists and parents themselves.

In many parts of the world, religious organizations play a vital role in the diffusion of mass education. In India, however, it has not happened through any of the indigenous religious movements. In some countries, secular ideologies stood for a system of national education favouring social equality. In India, on the contrary, *education has been largely an instrument of differentiation by separating children according to social classes.* Weiner attributes it to a *belief* rooted in society that there is a division between people who work with their minds and rule, and people who work with their hands and are ruled, and that education should reinforce rather than break down this division. This belief is held by people who hold the leftist as well as the rightist ideologies, religious believers and agnostics alike. For, "one does not readily escape from the core values of one's society."[5]

The clearest evidence for India's firm (if "unconscious") adherence to an ethos of elitism is the fact that she has 9% of her students in the university when China has 1%.[6] Another very clear example that establishes beyond doubt the case in point is the fact that the Navodaya schools that were opened for offering an opportunity to the talented *children of the weaker sections* of our people in rural areas have ended up serving the rural middle class and *urban elite.* The unspoken argument seems to be that quality education is an 'excess' and 'inappropriate' for the poor.[7]

It is at the level of this unshakable *mindset and civilizational bias* that we have to work. It is here that Christian evangelical alertness has to be exercised.

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[5]Weiner, *The Child and the State in India*, 6.

[6]According to the 2001 census, the all-India literacy rate is 65 per cent, 76 per cent for males and 54 per cent for females.

[7]Weiner, *The Child and the State in India*, 5.

2. Church's Teaching on Education[8]

2.1. The Goal of Education: The All-round Formation of the Human Person

Self-reliance and selflessness are important in education; they are achieved through personality development and social education, concern for self and concern for others. According to Vatican Council II, true education aims at the *all-round formation* of the human person in his/her pursuit of his/her ultimate end and of the good of the community to which he/she belongs. It seeks to develop his/her intellectual faculties to enable him/her to judge rightly, to hand on the cultural legacy of previous generations, to foster a respect for values and to develop his/her creative and aesthetic faculties. It equips him/her for his/her professional life (GE 1).

Education makes a young person capable of critically evaluating the world in which he/she lives, and making free, intelligent, and responsible decisions for the good of human society (RD 10). It helps him/her towards a conscious choice of living a responsible and coherent way of life (CS 49) and contributes to the formation of a *strong character* (CS 12). The knowledge that students acquire in the context of faith becomes wisdom and life vision (CSTM 14), making them capable of critically evaluating the one-dimension, narrow universe in which everything is looked at only from the point of view of utility (RD10), and resisting relativism in the context of the cultural pluralism of the present day society (CS 12).

2.2. Education to Social Responsibility

Our educational endeavour has for its goal the perfection of the human person who will build up a world that is eminently human (GE 3). It should help young people to acquire a mature sense of responsibility, to take part in social life, to be able to discourse with others and promote common good (GE 1).

Cultivation of the self and self-actualization have been the central concern in modern times. But any form of self-actualization that does

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[8]Some important documents from the Catholic Church analysed in this section are the following: GE: "*Gravissimum Educationis*" (1965); CS: "The Catholic School" (1977); LCS: "Lay Catholics in Schools" (1982); RD: "The Religious Dimension in a Catholic School" (1988); CSTM: "The Catholic School at the Threshold of the Third Millennium" (1997); CPMS: "Consecrated Persons and Their Mission in Education" (2002). Each paragraph summarizes the teachings of the Church as found in the above documents.

> not take reality as a whole is self-defeating. One does not become a developed personality by seeking some form of self-absorbed personal perfection and specializing in self-oriented forms of refinement, and neglecting one's responsibility for one's brothers and sisters and environment. Concern for others is a wealth inside a person to be revealed.[9]

During the period of education, young people are given the right understanding of the world, life, and the human person enlightened by faith, to order the whole human culture to the good news of salvation (GE 8). Education is not for gaining power, but for the fuller understanding of man, events and things. Knowledge is not merely for material success and prosperity, but to serve and be responsible for others (CS 56). Education must help the young person to *overcome individualism*, live his vocation responsibly in community along with others (CS 45).

Educators should be aware of and conversant with the socio-cultural, economic, and political environment of the school, at the local, regional, national, and even international levels (LCS 35). The students are led to a deeply felt commitment to the *wellbeing of society* and a profound sense of civic and political responsibility (LCS 19).

Great insistence is to be laid on developing the skill of relating well with other people, including those of other cultures, ideologies, and religious persuasions.[10] Young people shall be urged to work for the establishment of peaceful, fraternal, and communitarian social structures more conformed to the principles of the Gospel (LCS 19). Working for justice is part of the Christian mission. However, in struggling for a just cause, they should not forget that peace, and not the elimination of 'the other', ought to be the ultimate goal every human effort. In the context of growing communal and ethnic tensions, education to peace has assumed great importance in our days. It is through dialogue that we open out to new possibilities (CPMS 78).

As young people advance in years, they are to be given a positive and prudent sexual education as well (GE 1). A deeper understanding of

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[9]Abraham Vettical, *The Catholic School: A Labour of Love*, New Delhi: The CBCI Commission for Education, 2006.

[10]Recognising various differences, education helps to be open to others and to respect their ways of thinking and living (CS 57), avoiding misunderstanding and conflicts (CPMS 67), leading them towards a "civilization of love" (LCS 19).

the meaning of sexuality, the complementary nature of men and women, family life, the strength of mutual relationships that build up individual members of families as sound personalities, the joy of living together in closeness and intimacy, etc., will greatly contribute to the healthy growth of society.

2.3. Education to Culture

Education should "bring together the secular and the sacred, the mundane and the subtle, the routine and the profound... The emphasis must be on the spiritual that gives unity to reality and lends meaning and purpose to life."[11] Every kind of one-sidedness impoverishes. Exaggerations distort. School is a place for an encounter with cultural inheritance (CS 26). But the communication of culture should be organic, critical, and value oriented (LCS 29). Christian education promotes a culture that does not yield to pragmatism (CPMS 60), consumerism, and hedonism (CPMS 63), but offers values which generate the human attitudes of freedom that includes respect for others, conscientious responsibility, sincere and constant search for truth, a calm and peaceful critical spirit, a spirit of solidarity and service, a sensitivity for justice, and a sense of being called to becoming agents of change in society (LCS 30).

In the Indian context, young people should be introduced to the history, cultural wealth, and the most precious elements in our civilization. In all our heritage the most to be treasured are the values that have been handed down to us through centuries: religiosity, respect for the community, deference to elders and to traditions, attachment to family, non-aggressiveness, modesty in dress, dignity in behaviour, a commitment to knowledge and to the truth, etc. While proudly asserting our common Indianness, we should avoid every form of exclusivism, arrogance, and chauvinism, heal ourselves of the negative memories of the historic injuries we have received in the past, recognize the greatness and legitimate pride of other nations and civilizations, and be respectfully attentive to the individuality, uniqueness, and immense worth of diverse cultures of various ethnic groups and minority communities that dwell in this land.

While appreciating the importance of English as the language that gives access to advanced science, technology, higher education, computer,

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[11]Vettical, *The Catholic School.*

internet, and international contacts and competition, it should not become an alienating force, nor should it culturally uproot our young people from the world in which they live. Intellectual advance should not lead them to mental sophistication, softening of character, superiority complex, embarrassment about their original identity, distancing themselves from the community they come from, abhorrence of manual labour, abandonment of their original simplicity and willingness to mingle with people of lowly state.

In the final analysis, education seeks to work out a *synthesis between culture and faith* (i.e., acquiring knowledge and competence under the light of the Gospel), and between faith and life (CS 15). Education today should provide young people with the elements necessary for developing an *intercultural vision* in order to be able to live in multicultural and international situations, where they experience mutual knowledge, respect, esteem, and enrichment in concrete ways (CPMS 65). It should help them to participate in a dialogue of cultures, contribute to the total formation of the human person and to the cause of civilization (CS 15).

2.4. Agents of Education

Educators must reach out to their students with warmth and affection. Emotional intelligence gives them an awareness of their own and others' feelings, and helps them to develop empathy. Spiritual intelligence will help them to break their mental rigidities, confront and tap the resources of suffering that come on their way, notice relationship between different things and happenings, develop a holistic view of reality, work against the inflexibilities of convention, give leadership for community service, acquire a high degree of self-awareness, inspire others not by force or deceit or manipulation but by vision and values, and be unwilling to cause unnecessary harm.[12]

Parents have the primary and undeniable right and duty for educating their children. Consequently, they must enjoy the liberty in the choice of schools (GE 6). In fact, the family is the first school of social virtues: affection, respect, obedience, gratitude, gentleness, helpfulness, service, and good example (RD 4, 87).

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[12]A teacher should shift from being a 'note-giving' teacher to an 'idea-giving' teacher, from mark-sheet providing activity to idea providing, and thought provoking activities.

In a special way, the duty of educating belongs to the Church (GE 3). Educators ought to be persons of special qualities of mind and heart (GE 5). They should be equipped with adequate secular and religious knowledge, pedagogical skills and needed qualifications, and endowed with an apostolic spirit (GE 8) and Christian wisdom (CS 41). Their words and even their every gesture are important (CS 43).[13]

Lay people serving in Church schools can make a great contribution in every area and level of educational responsibility. Even in government schools or other institutions, they have an opportunity for apostolate. However, they should keep themselves updated (LCS 69) through personal reading, seminars, conferences, assemblies, congresses, and participation in similar events.

The religious who are engaged in the work of education have a privileged mission to fulfil. Young people must find in religious educators experienced interlocutors in search of God (CPMS 58). They should not get involved exclusively in academic-administrative tasks and not be taken over by activism. What they must do is give attention to the richness of their charism and try to develop it in response to the new social-cultural situations (CPMS 57). In fact, consecrated life ought to be engaged in a constructive dialogue with local culture, sometimes questioning and provoking it, and other times defending and preserving it, stimulating and interrogating in times of cultural disorientation (CPMS 14).

2.5. Forming an Educative Community

No one is an island. We are all part of a whole. We need to inter-relate and form a community with a sense of direction in our educational apostolate. Spirituality alone can keep a community together and build it into an educative community. The spirituality we are speaking about is not mere information about religion. Genuine spirituality, on the contrary, is something that "makes a person serene, open-minded, self-restrained, disciplined and willing to accept plurality of cultures, respect for individual rights, and be compassionate to the disadvantaged."[14]

The educational mission is carried out in a spirit of cooperation among various persons – students, parents, teachers, non-teaching

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[13]Children are keen observers of their parents and educators, and as a result values are absorbed unconsciously.

[14]Vettical, *The Catholic School*.

personnel, and the school management – who form an educational community (CPMS 4). They create an atmosphere that is conducive to education.[15] Aside from formally teaching ethical and moral values, educators should practise a pedagogy that emphasizes direct and personal contact with the students (LCS 21), making the schools places of encounter, listening, communication, where the students experience values in an essential way (CPMS 46).

Young people today are more depressed than in the past; they suffer from loneliness and lack of affection (RD 11). An educator acts as a companion and guide to the student, prudently combining familiarity with dignity (LCS 33). The school should be an extension of the home where there is a family atmosphere (RD 1, 27). Counselling assistance can be of great help to young people in stress.

Children should be introduced to the etiquette and cultural norms for dignified behaviour prevailing in the society in which they live. They should not forget that there is an honourable way of doing things even in the humblest society. They should also know how to conduct themselves in an inter-cultural situation, ready to adhere to more widely accepted codes of behaviour. Dignified self-presentation is not a sign of arrogance, but respect for others.

With the rapid degradation of the urban scene in India and widespread deforestation threatening to reduce the nation's forests to a few scattered bushes, mobilizing public opinion in favour of protecting the environment and creating an ecological awareness in our students have become most urgent. Indian educators like Tagore sought to keep students close to nature. Our ancestors went into the forests in search of wisdom; and aging God-seekers in our country retired into the Himalayan summits to end their days. A civilization that found God's presence in holy mountains, sacred rivers, refreshing springs, imposing forms of trees and rocks, and varied shapes and figures in nature, cannot remain insensitive to the alarming ecological deterioration that is taking place around us. God's creation calls for respect.

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[15]There should be personal involvement of students, genuine reciprocity, coherence of attitudes, consistent life-styles, and day to day behaviour (CSTM 18). There should be an atmosphere of sincere respect and cordiality (LCS 77).

2.6. The Spiritual Dimension of Education

Assertion of the Indian identity should include an affirmation of its religiosity. Indeed, education in the faith is part of the finality of a Catholic school (LCS 43). Educators should give abiding spiritual and intellectual assistance to youth (GE 10) and create an awareness of the transcendental (LCS 17). Education helps to draw out the ethical dimension in the human being (CS 30). The educational community creates a climate where a person develops the gift for searching and an eagerness to be guided in the mystery of his being and the reality that surrounds him, with openness to the threshold of faith (CPMS 51).

When there is a religious void in young people, they search for a substitute: the cult of the body, drug escape (RD 16), they look for satisfaction in the possession of material goods (RD 20). Such a tendency can be countered and curtailed only by providing effective spiritual initiation to the young minds by the educators. It shall not be an optional, but, following the spiritual ethos of India, a programme within which every student must participate.

2.7. Mission to the Marginalised

Catholic schools are for all, but give special attention to the weakest, socially and economically disadvantaged, young people left to their own devices, victims of new forms of poverty, those who have lost all sense of meaning of life, slaves of the new idols of society (CSTM 15), children of fragile or broken families (CPMS 69), those exposed to the dangers of violence and drug abuse (LCS 19), of alcohol, sex, and other evils (RD 13), youth in situations of poverty, hunger, conflict, civil war, urban deterioration and crime (CSTM 7). In the context of India, the disadvantaged will include dalits and tribals in particular. Women suffer most in every situation. People speak of "the other India," where the female foetus is aborted,[16] the girl child is put to hard labour and exploited within and outside the family; where dowry related problems lead to physical torture, mental agony, despair and death; where women have no voice in the household or in society; where most gifted individuals live out a life verging on despair. Amazingly, the women/men ratio is lowest in some of the more developed states like Maharashtra and Punjab. Education

[16]Further, it has been found that every third girl child born in India does not survive to see her teenage years.

must rescue women from such a dehumanizing situation. If the adage "as the mother, so the child" is true, it will be the entire Indian population that will benefit when we come to the aid of the girl child.

Schools should overcome individualistic self-promotion, encouraging solidarity instead of competition, assisting the weak instead of marginalisation, promoting responsible participation instead of indifference (CPMS 46). Thus, there should be centres for the training of retarded children and those in need of special assistance (GE 9).

Consecrated persons ought to have a special eagerness to serve the poorer youth, those from the working classes, by developing innovative projects in their behalf, including various types of non-formal education, and helping them to overcome every form of discrimination (CPMS 40). Some Catholic schools have restricted their educational activities to wealthier classes, thus, creating an impression of social and economic discrimination in education (CS 21). They run the risk of giving counter-witness (CS58). Moreover, consecrated persons work in order to assure that women are guaranteed access to education without any discrimination and that they can give their specific contribution to the good of the community and in favour of life and the humanization of cultures (CPMS 64).

3. The Indian Scene

India has produced world class engineers and business executives. However, a recent survey in Delhi revealed that as many as 48% of school and college going students suffer from depression, and about 9% have even attempted suicide. It may be good to have a quick look at the problems and possibilities of the Indian educational scene in order to understand the role of Catholic schools against the background of this complex reality. It must be admitted that things have progressed a great deal with Indian education, on the one hand, and things have gone terribly wrong, on the other.

Indian educational system is the second biggest in the world. India has the world's third largest pool of educational manpower. Indian higher educational system has produced world-class scientists, engineers, lawyers, doctors, managers and executives. India has more than 2 million trained scientists and technologists. We may legitimately boast of these and many more achievements. There has been, however, an increase of illiterates in India: from 333 million in 1961 to 437 million in 1981 (in

2006, around 350 million). Efforts for the universalization of education have met with limited success. Critical observers hold that four-fifths of the Indian population are uneducated for all practical purposes. Further, not only are a good proportion of the persons who are educated are unemployed, indeed, they are unemployable in the usual sense of the term.

3.1. Politicization of Education, Damage to Academic Climate

The public debate on Indian education enumerates a long list of woes.[17] A major complaint refers to excessive political interference in education. Teachers are used for serving the interests of the ruling party, canvassing for its candidates and organizing elections. The consequence has been that academic discipline and standards have fallen: teachers feel no qualms of conscience absenting themselves from class, being engaged in corrupt practices, leaking question papers, offering assistance to copying, and being partisan to students who take tuition from them, having recourse to severe corporal punishments. While we pay our profound respect to those dedicated teachers who are doing the greatest service to the nation serving the rising generation, we must also admit that not all of them are well motivated. It is not necessarily the most talented persons who opt for this profession today. Some have been appointed as teachers on compassionate grounds, under the scheme 'employment to educated unemployed'; some for political reasons too. Many are untrained, or poorly trained, and poorly paid. They take to devious ways in compensation: private tuition, embezzlement of school funds, and involvement in text book racket, etc., are some form of them.

The students go one step further. They engage brazen-facedly in mass copying and inhuman types of ragging; they introduce trade union type activities into the campus, indulge in vandalism, and go to the extreme extent of lending a hand to booth-capturing in elections, drug sale, and gun-running. They thrive on a *bandh*-culture, that too, in spite of the fact that, in some states, there are too many holidays already. Given the present system of education, many weak students drop out for lack of

[17]We have the following information from Advocacy Internet (Humanity Today): "Number of street children in India today: 18 million; those who die within a year of their birth: 2 million; those with HIV/AIDS: 1,70,000; those out of school 59 million; child labourers: 22-111 million; children living as bonded labourers 25%. India spends 3.5% on education (Kenya 6.7, Tanzania 4.3, Malaysia 7.8)

interest, and some intelligent children drop out for boredom with the curriculum and the environment.

3.2. Commercialization of Education

There is a complaint that education is being commercialized. We notice a mushrooming of private schools – money-minting centres or teaching shops – charging capitation fees, frequently raising the dues under various heads, and imposing many other burdens on the students. Industrial houses and NRIs are going in a big way into the field of education seeking higher profits. There are reports of fake universities coming up and distributing fake certificates. There are allegations that some autonomous colleges are churning out degrees that have no reference to any standard.

India's record of corruption is truly alarming. Businessmen keep a generous percentage of their annual budget for bribing politicians, officers, policemen and vigilance personnel. The disease affects every area of public life and every level of the administration. Large sums of the poverty relief schemes and rehabilitation programmes are embezzled. Education department does not escape the plague.

Payment of capitation fees has developed, in fact, into an impressive system. Many are willing to pay too, especially the rural elite who had missed earlier opportunities for quality education – the upwardly mobile class – the *nouveau riche*. Consequently, there is an over-crowding of students into classrooms. In some places, a system with several shifts has been introduced, with the schools operating like factories and production centres. While Christian schools have kept clear of these excesses, they have not always succeeded in resisting the fatal virus. Our centres, of course, start with the best of intentions; but ultimately pragmatic motives prevail over evangelical and humanitarian considerations.

3.3. A Competition that Puts out Hope

With excessive commercialization comes a spirit of fierce competition. We all agree that a competition that stimulates personal effort is good; but we also know that a competition that puts out hope is disastrous. Admission into prestigious schools and specialised courses has turned into a veritable nightmare. To get the children ready for the competitive world, they are admitted into schools too early in life, overloaded with textbooks, overburdened with an excess of homework. Psychologists insist that such premature mental strain can damage their tender minds. They are not even

allowed to enjoy their childhood and benefit from the normal pace of physical and psychological growth.

As the students move to higher classes, competition becomes more intense. Expectations of both parents and children begin to soar to unrealistic heights. Children are not helped to understand that success cannot be defined by marks alone, that success in exams does not necessarily mean success in life, that a third division does not necessarily mean disaster. Fear of the job market makes students tense. Young people should be taught that there are other ways of looking at success and failure. A strategy for success should always include a strategy to cope with failure. After all, true success consists in finding solutions to difficult problems in life, not stealing the limelight or winning public recognition.

3.4. A Defective System

There has been much debate on what is described as the *creativity-killing education* system that prevails in India: about the curriculum, teaching style, the way of conducting the examinations, and evaluation criteria. It is said that the present system which was introduced during the colonial period only produces an army of clerks, peons, and errand boys, as the private education system produces '*sahibs* and *memsahibs*'!

No doubt, some manner of updating the system is required with changing times. It is absolutely necessary, on the one hand, that our young people be introduced to our civilizational heritage and, thus, grow proud of it. It is equally necessary, on the other hand, that they are acquainted with new thinking in every area of life. We, however, do a disservice to the nation when distorted facts are planted into young minds. The BJP proposed to re-write history books, glorifying the Hindu past and denigrating the minority contribution to Indian civilization. They thought it good to introduce astronomy, religious rituals, and Vedic mathematics into the university syllabus. The Marxists have re-written several textbooks supporting the Marxist ideology. Regional scholars are re-writing textbooks highlighting regional greatness. Not much of such re-writing has been forward-looking, nor has it made the textbooks more relevant or educative. Rather, they have often made persons and communities more contentious. They keep *planting new prejudices* into young minds, and the next generation will not know where their anger and aggressiveness come from.

Efforts for the vocationalisation of education and plans for providing work experience during school hours have not been an unqualified success in a society that abhors manual labour. A similar effort for moving away from a mere examination-oriented system, a system that favours rote-memory, has also met with limited success. Debates have continued whether education should be results-oriented, certificate-oriented, job-oriented, skills-oriented, work-oriented, knowledge-oriented, or life-oriented. It is not everyone that sees the necessity of adopting a holistic view of things, as the Church has been exhorting educators to do. After all, we are not producing human machines to serve the market – just workers and consumers – but human persons who have their own identity, dignity, role in history, and an ultimate destiny.

3.5. Signs of Hope

While generally Catholic schools have succeeded in keeping away from most of the weaknesses described above, we cannot deny that these schools too are part of an imperfect system. True, they have made a contribution to discipline, efficiency, high standard, moral quality, and excellence within Indian education system. At the same time, they must squarely face the questions regarding transparency, accountability, and not in being a burden to the poor. Moreover, they must also see whether they have broken new ground in improving the system and in placing it at the service of the deprived communities, whether they attend to the welfare of the employees, and whether there are child-labourers in the campus or at the service of activities that they have initiated.

While mobilizing resources is necessary for education, commercialization of education is degrading. While there is a place for competition and search for success in everyone's life, there is also room for cooperation and sharing. Eagerness for excellence should not lead us to alienation from the masses. Quality education should not mean producing snobs, parasites, and exploiters of their own fellow-beings, but leaders committed to the welfare of society. Intellectual ascendancy should not make one look down on manual labour or those engaged in it.

The more gifted and better educated children should be motivated to help their weaker companions in the school itself or in the neighbourhood. They can, for example, reach out to slums and rural areas. In the same way our institutions can cater to the needs of the larger society by launching literacy classes for adults and evening classes for poor children. Life

becomes interesting for young people when they are busy helping each other. The staff and other volunteers can get involved in beneficial activities, like non-formal education programme, income-yielding skills, formative hobbies, encouraging traditional arts and crafts among illiterate boys and girls, assisting physically or mentally challenged persons, offering remedial courses for drop-outs, follow-up programmes for neo-literates, teaching song, dance, etiquette, and social behaviour to slum-dwellers, educating people about social evils like alcoholism, drug abuse, giving tips on health, hygiene, family responsibilities, information on HIV/AIDS to young adults, etc.

When we are tempted to be pessimistic about the present system of education, we ought to remember that for all its weaknesses, it produced men of the calibre of a J. C. Bose, a C. V. Raman, and in our own days a K. R. Narayanan, and many such outstanding personalities.

4. Church's Concern for the Marginalised

4.1. Clarity of Vision

Christian education is the continuation of Jesus' mission of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. It is our bounden duty to impart religious education to Christian children and to bring them up in the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church. We ought to create an evangelical atmosphere in our schools so that everyone may derive some inspiration from the Gospel message. It is precisely for this that we have been given special protection and guarantees in the Indian Constitution. Our educational institutions should, therefore, promote the Christian formation of Catholic youth and ensure the moral formation of young people of other religious traditions.

4.2. Commitment to the Marginalized

Christian sense of mission impels those involved in conducting educations institutions to give a preferential option for the poor and marginalized, and for the education of their children. In our Indian context the marginalized would include the poor, dalits, tribals, women in general, rural women in particular, slum dwellers, child labourers, unorganized workers, physically or mentally challenged people, drug addicts, victims of violence, etc.

Many dioceses and religious congregations have launched several programmes in aid of the poor, like remedial classes, offering scholarships, interest free loans, free supply of books, teaching aids, free tuitions, etc. Many religious societies have opted to locate more of their educational

institutions in the rural area. Some have decided to work for the defence of the girl child, and empowerment of women.

If a recent survey is indicative, it is encouraging to note that 55% of Catholic educational institutions are in rural areas, that 42% of students of these institutions come from families below poverty line, that another 33% are of the lower income group, and 25% from dalits and tribals. While these institutions educate over 10 million students every year, 23% of them are Catholic and 5% of them are of other Christian churches. It is also reassuring to be told that 54% of the students educated are girls.

It should be the pride and joy of every Catholic educational institution to increase the number of Catholic students, and those from dalit, tribal, and less privileged communities. In order that this venture be a success, we should create in the school an atmosphere where the poor can feel at home. If not, they would drop out. It should be our concern not to lay excessive financial burden on the poorer students, e.g., with high fees, expensive uniforms, financial impositions under various heads, including school celebrations, visits of VIPs, costly school magazines, etc.

4.3. Educating the Marginalized beyond the Margins

In spite of launching any number of programmes for bringing literacy to the Indian masses, we have ended up in having half the illiterates of the world. Even at the beginning of the 21st century, 350 million Indians are unable to read and write. It is high time that all groups join hands together to wipe out illiteracy from our society. In Russia, China, and Cuba highly motivated political activists contributed a great deal to the promotion of literacy among the masses in an inexpensive manner. Religious personnel can do better in this regard.

Missionaries worked miracles in the area of mass education in Mizoram and Nagaland. Church workers have done so in the Philippines. The rapid rise of educational standards in Northeast India and in Jharkhand has been the fruit of Church effort. Sister Cyril of Kolkata has shown how students can be involved in similar service in our own days.[18] If literacy rates have shot up from 18% to over 50% in Arunachal Pradesh during the last few decades, it has again been a Christian missionary contribution.

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[18]"A Myth-Challenging School in India," http://www.psg.us/resources/ccmyth challenge.html [30 May 2006].

"Once a person learns to read, he reads avidly," stated a volunteer who worked for literacy.

Christian missionaries gave a script to most tribal languages in Northeast India, gave them grammars, dictionaries, and basic literature, including the Bible. The publication in 1842 of Orunodoi, a monthly periodical devoted to science, religion, and general information gave the Assamese language a boost. Between 1846 and 1851 the (Baptist) mission had five million pages of reading material. This constituted ninety per cent of the total Assamese literature published in those years.

As we have seen earlier, what we have to work on is to change the mindset of the middle class and convince them that young people of the humbler society deserve a 'preferential attention' in today's India. That a 'hidden Einstein' may be awakened in a dalit child with education, that a 'mute Milton' may be given utterance in a tribal youth, that a 'dormant Ambedkar' may come to life under our loving educative care. We should not forget that Vālmīki and Vyāsa, the authors of the two greatest epics of Indian civilization, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhāratha*, were not of the dominant castes. Talent can lie beyond the mainstream, and it does, indeed! If we go by the interpretation of certain historians that it was precisely indigenous tribal communities that were subdued, subjugated and reduced to the dalit status, then we truly begin to understand that much of the ancient greatness of India was due to communities that today we consider 'marginalized'. They are not only capable of basic literacy, but also of quality education!

4.4. Quality Education

There is often a wrong understanding of quality education. We are not referring to a system that is glued to competition, grading, standardizing, and herding of children, making machines out of men so that they become mere 'producers and consumers', lopsided creatures, power-hungry leaders who learn from each other how to excel in corruption. Quality education in the true sense produces persons with thought and feeling, with eagerness to share, persons who are capable of looking to nobler things in life.

We are all too much involved in education not to know the meaning of 'quality education'. A search for excellence is much in Christian tradition. Aside from ensuring the development of intellectual and psychological dimension of the young student, education to excellence aims at the all-round development of the human person, mental acuteness,

social awareness, healthy relationships, refined manners, dignified self-presentation, intelligent and clear self-expression, perfect diction, and thoroughness about everything he/she does. Most of all, quality education perfects one's learning skills and attends to the ongoing education. As we have seen earlier in this paper and in many church documents, a Christian understanding of excellence in education is more holistic.

'Quality education' has to be understood also contextually. Children of illiterate parents, students who missed good primary education in neglected village or slum schools, may not rise to great heights in the academic field immediately. The skill of the educator consists in drawing each person according to his/her ability and competence to the levels he/she is capable of. We must not forget that Abraham Lincoln rose to greatness from an illiterate family, and that Shastri and Kamaraj rose from a poor background.

Education today will not be considered complete if young people are not introduced to issues like human rights, minority rights, children's rights, consumer rights, women's liberation, environmental issues, need for peace, trans-cultural relationships, etc. However, struggle for rights should neither end up in mere rhetoric, on the one hand, nor aggressiveness, on the other. Education to justice should point to the path of peace. We have men like Mahatma Gandhi and Dalai Lama to show us the way how one can fight for one's rights with dignity and without having recourse to violence.

Education to peace does not mean merely propagating some pacifist slogans, holding some peace seminars or courses. It means earnestly working on various forms of prejudice reduction: prejudices against persons of other castes (both higher and lower), tribes, languages, political affiliations, ideologies, theological point of view, regions and religions. Theologies and ideologies that add an aggressive dimension to justice struggles, and histories that keep injuries of the past alive, make a negative contribution to the cause of peace. Education to peace includes teaching youth to deal respectfully with people of other convictions, cultures, and civilizations, even with those who are totally against Christians. It means learning to dialogue with people with whom we have conflicting interests. This has become absolutely necessary in this era of globalization. Missionaries who work across cultures contribute a great deal to peace by learning and teaching trans-cultural skills, getting involved in actual peace negotiations in contexts of communal or inter-ethnic tension.

5. Alternative Educational Models

5.1. Vocationalisation of Education

It is a great mission to inculcate esteem for manual labour and promote a work-culture in a society in which such values are almost absent. Mahatma Gandhi believed that education should lead to the acquisition of a skill that offered employment. He set an example of work with his spinning wheel.

The technical schools for boys and girls have been rendering an invaluable service in this field. They have been offering both formal and non-formal courses in practical skills that could help a person to make a living. *Grihini* schools (on domestic sciences) help a young woman to prepare herself for the responsibilities of a family. We can also be proud of the special training centres for physically and mentally challenged people, slum children, drop outs, drug addicts, women in difficulty, etc., that have come into existence in our days. They are addressing the challenges of new forms of poverty. In a world thrown out of gear by globalization, every form of remedial courses, programmes in preparation for formal studies, training for entertaining skills, puppet shows, initiation to folk art and story telling, dramas and public events with a message, spoken English course, training in traditional art skills like carving, carpentry, weaving, bee-keeping, care of poultry, piggery, and every kind of marketable skill, etc., have something relevant to offer for the uplift of one or another group of people.

5.2. Communitization of Education

Communitization of education means making the community responsible for the education of its members as well as the beneficiary of the education of its members. Unfortunately, it is often noticed that while the individual is developed, the community fails to receive any substantial benefit from the education imparted to the individuals. Because of this, the community does not feel motivated to support education.

The institution needs to reach out to the community in the neighbourhood with beneficial activities, like literacy programme, non-formal education, *balwadis*, street plays, etc. Students are to be made aware of the needs of the community. Youngsters should not become uprooted individuals through educational institutions, but should remain part of the local community to which they would eventually return, and contribute to its growth and development. Students should be trained

through exposure programmes and situation analysis to commit themselves to the neediest. Many institutions have already adopted poor villages offering special assistance.

Educators themselves should be inserted into the culture of the society they serve. It necessarily leads to the effective work of education. Such educators will develop and enhance the social consciousness of students and their concern for the community to which they belong, so that they, in turn, may promote its sustainable development.

5.3. Networking

Networking is necessary among various church related agencies, other private institutions in the field of education, with the government, with legislators and policy-makers at every level, and the alumni of Catholic educational institutions who have become influential in society, people of other persuasions and loyalties, and even with groups that seem to oppose us.

It is only with the assistance of all people of good will that we become effective in the aid of the poor and their education. The work we have in hand is so important and so great that its success can be assured only with the cooperation of all people in the field of education. There should be greater interaction between the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) and the Conference of Religious of India (CRI) at the regional and national levels.

5.4. Public Advocacy

Advocacy does not mean a protest campaign or a denunciation drama, but a drive to change public opinion about an issue: it may be aimed at changing a policy or a mindset. Education of the marginalized is the responsibility of the government. However, we are well aware that what the government lacks is not well defined policies, but the political will to implement them. For example, a report said: "The government opened the school but did not send any teacher."[19] Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India, even as a Rajya Sabha MP from Assam, had noticed in 1998, an absence of this political will for universalizing primary education. A strong public pressure was essential, he said. Realistically he had affirmed that the lobby for steel, power, and industrial sectors was more

[19] *Times of India*, 4.6.94.

powerful.[20] It is essential to mobilize public opinion to exert pressure on the government to bridge the gap between official rhetoric and hard reality. Only then will the slogan "education for all" will have any meaning in the Indian situation.

In order that Christian institutions may become the leaven in the Indian society, they must remain knowledgeable about the problems of the poor in a constantly changing situation, win credibility as spokespersons for the poor, keep in touch with persons who can contribute to their cause, and organize volunteers who can successful carry out programmes. One may write letters to policy-makers, address audiences, use the media, or organize groups, mobilize persons who matter, to exert an influence on pubic opinion. But the goal in every case is the changing of a mindset.

6. Conclusion

In working for the education of the marginalized in India, we are working against a *long-established belief-system that people are not meant to be equal*. It means more than struggling against a mindset. It means contending against deep-rooted convictions. It is against this unshakable belief-system that the Christian evangelical sturdiness will need to test its staying power.

The Catholic identity of a school will include diligent teaching of religion to Catholic children, education in moral values to students of all communities, creating an evangelical climate in all educational contexts, and radical commitment to the poor. We propose that an action plan be drawn up which should include an inbuilt system for monitoring and evaluation, at the national, regional, and local levels.

Radical statements in favour of the poor alone are not enough. People are tired of empty rhetoric. Often we find that the more radical the statement in favour of the poor, lesser the commitment. People can see through the documents made by script-writers, and those that have sprung from mature experience: There is difference between those who merely seek to be politically correct, and those that come from profound convictions, and those who appear merely populist and those who are action-oriented. There is a difference between statements made by people who have been dealing only with ideas, and those who have been dealing with people. The latter will present concrete strategies and result-oriented

[20] *Times of India*, 25.4.98.

planning. Our goal is not merely a glamorous proposal, but effective implementation, practical steps to the ultimate goal.

Wherever efforts for the promotion of literacy or universlisation of education failed in concrete situations, the organizers felt the need of *Preraks* (i.e., inspirers or motivators) who would provide a working philosophy favouring the initiative, urge generosity in voluntary workers, and elicit commitment among them. The challenge of Christian educators today is to become *Preraks*, to inspire and motivate others.

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EDUCATION BEYOND RATIONALITY

Maja Milčinski♦

Let me start with a story from Indian tradition. A well-known svāmī was asked by a poor mother of a sugar addicted son to help her and the entire family, which was brought on the verge of economic collapse by the unhealthy manners of the boy, whose health was already ruined. After various doctors, therapists, and wise men tried to persuade the boy to change his unhealthy manners, the woman finally sought the advice of the svāmī, who immediately sent the mother and the boy home and ordered them to come back in two weeks. After two weeks they visited the svāmī again. Following this encounter the boy was completely cured of his self-destructive behavioural pattern. The surprised mother gratefully returned to the svāmī and asked him why did they have to travel the long way after two weeks again. Could he not help them the first time? The svāmī explained her that in order to persuade the boy, he first had to try to live without sugar himself, to try and be sure that he himself was able to carry out and incorporate the learning which he was trying to hand over to the boy.

What kind of education are we able to transmit to the children if we ourselves do not engage in some kind of spiritual training which would enable us to embrace life in all its manifestations and provide us with necessary flexibility for survival and growth through various crises, setbacks, illnesses, etc., which represent important tests of our daily living?

From the perspective of the so-called socialist ethical orientation, which was dominant in various countries of the 20th century, I will try to show how such one-dimensionality as a by-product of an ideology might be transcended by insights of Asian spiritual traditions, which might help to provide tools for the young people in the search of their own way and the generation of their own well-being also in the times of crises which are necessary part of the growing up process.

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Allowing myself to reflect on the dilemma of education and rationality, or, rather, on the search for the most suitable ways of education, I find it to be a general problem to do with quick growth of science, on one side, and the availability of experts (real teachers or professors), on the other: professors who are in a position to be able to catch up with the new knowledge and to be able to impart it to the younger generation in a way of a multidimensional spirituality. At the same time real teachers should be able to overcome the conservative trends, which long ago gave up their scientific and pioneer spirit and are just trying to hold on to their status and feeling of self-satisfaction. Somebody who is genuinely working for science and education and their development has to accept the fact that one should nurture the pioneer role all the time. At the other end, somebody who has reached the status of "respected professor" and is only reproducing the same curriculum is not just a dry bough, but a very dangerous root, which endangers the whole tree of scientific knowledge and spiritual education. We are also confronted with the phenomenon, that in these transitional periods some unqualified people without real knowledge and experience are flourishing and are carrying science into the area of improvisation. One of the constitutional acts of my *Alma Mater*[1] stated that a university is not an institution whose sole purpose is to give the country and the nation a certain number of bureaucrats, doctors, lawyers, and judges, but it is a higher spiritual place, where permanent spiritual dimensions are formed; it is the free and public property of a free nation. The fact that, in the Europe of the Middle Ages, the universities included theology and philosophy in their programme is explained by a basic need of the thinking being: to be able to catch one's essence and one's role in this world first and, then, to mobilize one's intellect to understand what is there in the environment to be changed and what should be taken as it is. At the same time, the high mission of university as a self-critical institution which should be the highest place of the spirit and the creator of permanent spiritual values should not be endangered by supporting the programme of the political parties which have been the closest to its ideology; it should, however, avoid the reductionism and political contamination and should lead towards humanity and harmony in the area of rich pragmatism offered by the universities in today's world. Various political ideologies should not be allowed to infiltrate themselves into the

[1]Ljubljana University, Slovenia, Europe.

programme and management of the university, which is also partly seen from the trends in general education. Such ideological support can obviously not make any scientific and spiritual contribution or creativity and make the life of university any richer, especially in the spiritual sense.

This was even more true for the secularised societies, where creation of moral-ethical norms was entrusted to the political forums and Marxist philosophy, which pledged that any "misfortunes" in life, which constantly appear, should be constantly changed into valuable human contexts, whereby each individual can take part in the making of humanity. In the fight for the moral quality of the act, the people were asked for "constant self-formation" and constant process of distancing from oneself and others. No wonder that such one-dimensional rational ethics got into crisis. Ethics is at least two-dimensional. It is a theoretical and philosophical practice, which can be well-defined and formulated in a series of norms. On the other hand, it is also an intimate, hardly describable inner feeling that something is good and right from the viewpoint of humanity and the cosmos, sometimes similar to what Socrates named as "daimonion." One cannot define this coordinate with rational definitions, nor can one approach it with logical measures. It can only be perceived, experienced as a mystical flash, for which the conditions and the atmosphere can be created with a certain meditative preparation. The ethical decision – the one that would free a person from various doubts – can be met where the alert rational judgement accords with that intrinsic feeling. There should be some space left for another, meditative, mystical dimension, which does not even depend on whether "one believes in God or not..." in the Euro-American sense and thus, cannot be a monopoly of this or that church or party.

Different movements and upheavals that can be perceived are in this sense stimulating, even though at the present stage they are seemingly anarchic. Could they be understood as an analogy with the formation of Neo-Confucianism in China, which has grown – if such a simplification would be permitted – as an alloy of orthodox Confucianism with mystical Daoism[2] and Buddhism? The problem of wisdom and liberation are the main concerns of these two central Chinese philosophical schools, Confucianism and Daoism. Confucius stressed the importance of

[2]The Pinyin transcription for Chinese characters has been used; therefore, Daoism instead of the older transcription Taoism, Dao instead of Tao, etc.

benevolence (*ren*) in relation to ritual and rules of propriety (*li*). The self-realisation can be achieved and the wishes should be fulfilled in the specific ethical context. Daoism, famous for its use of paradox, which should bring the adept to a higher level of understanding and experiencing the reality, understood the Truth as *purity and sincerity of the highest degree*. The Superior man is able to reach the *Dao* and one's own liberation through meditation, intuition and congeniality with the feminine.

As for the notion of truth and education in its spirit, we can seek the truth more or less obsessively, or we can knowingly evade it, distort it deliberately, or flee from it through anxiety or fear. We can perhaps erase it from the consciousness, and may pronounce extreme states in one direction or another as 'sick'. We can also practise it, as happened in Asian traditions, without devoting logical thought to it. Do differences in cultures exist in relation to these different characteristics on a continuum: *truth-lies?*

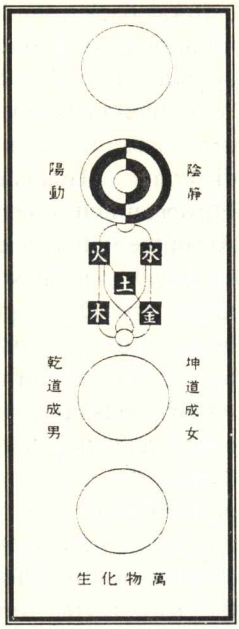
There is, in fact, keenly present in man's consciousness, a conflicting inclination between truth and a tendency to lie, especially when it comes to accepting the inescapable fact of life, sickness, and death not only on an intellectual, rational level, but with the participation of the whole personality, with all its emotional and spiritual accompaniments. History and a cross-section of modern systems of values show considerable differences from this point of view. Even if we do not enter the realm of "border situations" (*Grenzsituationen* as Karl Jaspers named them) and remain on the level of more or less codified forms of awareness and "protocol" in the context of everyday or occasional meetings in human society, we come across interesting differences in relative manifestations in the Asian world, on the one hand, and European-American world, on the other. Profound analysis reveals the difference and roots of these in the collective subconscious of the world of human spirituality.

Anxiety about existence pushes mankind everywhere into striving for insurance against every sort of frustration in life, whereby they frequently overstep the border of the rational, in the search for an elixir of longevity, or even (illusory) immortality. In the subconscious world, even modern man has not succeeded in overcoming this illusion. Philosophy, religion, and education in a broader sense are intended to offer man wisdom by which he can support his life struggle, and which enables him to understand and emotionally accept the law of man's life and remain open for the Path among people who have grown up in the European-American

cultural background and those who have been part of the Asian cultural traditions. The theme is somewhat more topical because the moment is approaching when the philosophy and methods of overcoming the Path to "enlightenment" or "salvation" of the European and Asian worlds will meet and, thus, in creating unity help also in preserving individual differences. This is even more important in the era of the breakthrough of European and American rationalism, as well as its interaction with some Asian theoretical and practical approaches in education. In this framework, a critical analysis should be offered to the question of modernisation and rationality. Development in a certain direction deserves special attention because of the complexity of the theme, and because of the specific problems of the influx and interaction of Euro-American rationalism in the Asian perspectives and the theoretical currents which are either receptive or are rejecting them. I will try to show the problem of rationalism, the modes of transcending it in education and in a philosophical position, as well as in a way of thought. It became established alongside neo-Confucianism and its approach to rationality and education with the central attention in the field of methodology and the transformation of the neo-Confucian tradition into a strictly rationalist orientation. By rethinking this stream of thought and education, one might come closer to the movements related to the levels of consciousness that were activated in philosophical undertakings in various Asian philosophical schools which from the beginning through various stages of their development have attempted to put the inexpressible into words. The awareness of the insufficiency of words brought many original solutions. In the Song dynasty, for instance, China produced a variety of diagrams (*tu*), by which the philosophers and practitioners represented their theories, which often arose on the basis of meditation techniques and could not be fully transmitted by means of language alone.

In the following I shall present it as an example of trans-rational representation of the Truth and education in it, a case of Chinese spiritual topography from the Song dynasty (960-1279). Zhou Dunyi's (1017-1073) *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate Explained* (*Taiji tushuo*) and in Zhu Xi's (1130-1200) commentary to it, brings us once again to the problem of the possible Buddhist origin of the diagram. It contains a graphical presentation of the progressive awakening to the Truth, a distinct form of Buddhist cartography of spirit, formed by half-black, half-white circles. Not entering the question of its origin (be it Buddhist or Daoist) and who

borrowed it from whom, I would rather reflect upon the question of what significance it might have for education beyond words, especially in regard to the dimension of practice or practical philosophy. Is it possible that such diagrams indicate that at a certain point of describing the way to the revelation of Truth, the philosophers and practitioners gave up words – which later commentators of the diagram reintroduced?



Before concentrating on the diagram, it might be instructive to have a look at one of the possible readings of the text, namely a Buddhist stand on a non-Ego, trans-Ego approach to the world, based on the realization of the fact that the things and phenomena in the world exist and cease according to their own rules and because of themselves, and not because of ourselves and in accordance with our own laws and expectations. A liberating thought, which might also be read in the following passage by Shao Yung (1011-1077):

> Look at things from the point of view of things, and you will see (their true) nature; look at things from your own point of view, and you will see (only your own) feelings; for nature is neutral and clear, while feelings are prejudiced and dark![3]

If we look at the central preoccupation of Neo-Confucians – the ways of attaining sagehood and incorporating it into their own lives, which means that it was not only a theoretical speculation based on ancient methods, but also a realizable state of existence – we might take Zhou Dunyi as the author who stressed the importance of tranquillity in education and self-cultivation. There are other passages by Zhou Dunyi, in which he states that the original nature of human beings is pure and tranquil. The question of tranquillity will also serve us as a gateway to Zhou Dunyi's *Taiji tushuo*. Whether or not this very short work, so important for Neo-Confucian metaphysics and so instructive for education beyond pure rationality, has brought anything new to Chinese thought or not, is not a

[3]See Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956, 2: 456.

question to be discussed here. Since it opened up a period of such broad and differentiated speculation in the Song dynasty, it will rather serve us as an example of a text which, although loaded with Buddhist tones, directed a different orientation in Chinese intellectual history, namely the Neo-Confucianism. As such it is important for education and its understanding, since it displays clear trans-rational characteristics and is an example of a diagram deriving from and used for meditative purposes and self-knowledge.

To recapitulate briefly: *Taiji tushuo* is an explanation (*shuo*) of the diagram (*tu*) of Supreme Ultimate (*taiji*) deriving from Ultimate of Non-Being (*wuji*) and producing *yin* and *yang* or the universal active and tranquil cosmic forces which, in union with the Five Elements, engender all things, of which the human being is the most intelligent. It is a cosmological scheme that has been produced by the imaginative word of this "most intelligent" of beings, who have also been endowed with wisdom that the subtlest thoughts of the mind cannot be expressed in words. As in the *Yijing* (*The Book of Changes*), where the images are the sort of steps in impermanence to the eternal end, so here we deal with a form of imago where an element of human personality is already present, and the image formed by its specific laws of experiencing and imagining the world and one's place in it. Thus, it is already a mediated view, since the objective Truth is not possible. The formation of any idea is already a shift from anything that might be called 'Truth'.

The important point in Zhou Dunyi is the *wuji* being the origin of *taiji*. This statement can also be found in the *Dao de jing* (chapter 40), as well:

> Reversion is the action of Dao.
> Weakness is the function of Dao.
> All things in the world come from being
> And being comes from non-being.[4]

Wuji is the great emptiness from which the original Beginning is born and which is situated before the Five Elements. In Zhou Dunyi, the empty circles at the bottom and on the top of the diagram create the middle space as a contrast to tranquillity – the middle space of the diagram is a realm of

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[4]See the English translation in *The Way of Lao Tzu* (*Tao-te thing*), translated with introductory essay, comments, and notes by Wing-tsit Chan, New York: Macmillan, 1985, 173.

change. We should, however, not forget at this point that according to Buddhism, the notion of change is proof of unreality. The myriad changes are all man's creations. In reality there is just one thing, or rather nothing – a supreme void – symbolized by an empty circle. The void circle might also indicate the possible dissolution of the boundary between the self and the non-self, which in its consequence leads to tranquillity bound to bliss and happiness. The boundary is important because it divides the 'real' world from the 'illusory' (phenomenal) one, which is void. The Great Void without any physical form, a paragon of perfect impartiality and a field of complete lack of Ego-interests is the above-form realm beyond-form in which the world of changes becomes irrelevant.

However, it is the world of human beings which is the very place of purification, since, with all its resources of the impure and obstructions, it offers a person the very possibility of spiritual transformation. In this dimension of the cultivation of mind, we see the necessary dimension of tranquillity so stressed by Zhou Dunyi, the master of quiescence, and often referred to as a source of a possible strain of quietism in Song thought. If Zhou Dunyi regarded tranquillity or stillness as fundamental, made it his main consideration, it is instructive to look at the polarity between stillness and movement in the *Yijing* (*The Book of Changes*), one of the books from which he drew his inspiration. He adopted the *Yijing*'s assumption of a polarity between tranquillity and movement as its complement and, therefore, with the change, achieved continuity, and with continuity illusory permanence.

As for education we might look at the *Taiji tushuo* and Zhu Xi's commentary to it, and see that the 7th chapter is the most representative with regard to tranquillity. Here, tranquillity is the condition for the renovation of reality, nature. The heart should be tranquil and at rest without any desires. This heart is the heart of the superior man who, with his equanimity, is able to meet life's events without being affected or overrun by them. In this sense, one masters a situation. Only from such a stand can any activity begin. Although activity is indispensable for any being, when one takes a human being into consideration, it is tranquillity, which, according to Zhou Dunyi, is central and vital.

Looking at the diagram, we realize that it is *wuji* which is the central point around which any process of cosmic life and development is centred and from which the myriad phenomena derive and to which they return. It is the graphical presentation brought to the metaphysically ontological

level of ultimate reality as perceived through the meditative experience of the enlightened mind. So, the middle level represents the transitoriness of the phenomenal world in its myriad forms and appearances. It represents the level of a constant change. Philosophically, we see here the Buddhist notion of change contrasted with the real void nature of the world. It is the meditative experience brought into language as a diagram when the mind encounters the diverse phenomena of the world. So, the diagram in its form and content is a formulation for this occasion, based on the Chinese Chan and Japanese Zen Buddhist notion that ultimately denied the possibility of words in language to articulate the enlightened mind adequately. So, the Buddhist voidness is visually represented by the void circle. It is the metaphysical timeless nature of all things which is represented by the *wuji* in the form of a void circle. It also represents the pivotal point of the mind in the stage where there is no feeling or awareness of anything, no notion, thought or images anymore. It is the consciousless state where the universe reflects its original nature of nothingness. This is the central point of consciousness and, at the same time, also the central point of universe represented by the *wuji* point, the infinite, beyond which there is nothing, the "no ridgepole" if we borrow Lao Zi's or Zhuang Zi's words.[5]

This text, inaugurating Neo-Confucian metaphysics, is bound to Buddhist spiritual training, metaphysics, and religious philosophy, not to Buddhism in its "life-denying" dimension, which was sometimes been attributed to it. Meditation is far from being an otherworldly undertaking. It is the most 'here-and-now-ish' practice we can imagine, though ontology based on it derives from the possibility of overcoming insatiable desires, including the desire to live and to stop the usual thinking process, which in its Western context, is connected to life itself. Therefore, for some western exegetes, the process of meditation means a threat to the essence of the life process itself, which in its original Buddhist context is rather a life-attesting than a life-denying dimension. It includes, however, a human quest for transcendence and ultimacy and spiritual development often very closely connected to the inner alchemy of Daoism. So, we should be aware that with authors like Zhou Dunyi, although obviously influenced by Buddhism in spiritual dimensions and cultivation, we deal

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[5]Chen Guying, *Laozi shizhu he pingjie*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984; Chen Guying, *Zhuangzi jinshi jinzhu*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983.

with spheres that can sometimes be autonomous Neo-Confucian cultivation levels and not just Buddhist or Daoist influences.

A view of the diagram and the *wuji* being the source of the manifold world which returns to it might remind us of the position of physical drives, emotions, desires and imagination in Buddhist meditation practices that form the basis of the physical or spiritual internal purification and transformation. It is, however, not clear if Zhou Dunyi really turned these dimensions to a purely ethical direction. It is true that inner tranquillity became the foundation of proper moral activity, but we might also take into consideration that Zhou Dunyi was a philosopher much too closely related to Buddhism and Daoism to limit the manifold human mind to the ethical dimension only. Only the fact that he has chosen the diagram (*tu*) – a form of esoteric topography describing various meanings in the spiritual sphere, as the centre of his work – points to some other qualities of the mind.

This very stress on tranquillity was later supplemented by Zhu Xi with his theory of mindfulness. So, the first attention that Zhou Dunyi as the author of *Taiji tushuo*, as the cornerstone of Neo-Confucian metaphysics, deserves should always be concerned with its practical application to education and to spiritual self-cultivation in its path to ultimate personal fulfilment. He remains the first to write an explanation of the graphical presentation, starting with the empty circle and, finally, returning to it. So, the conceptualization of reality is one with the unity of everything symbolized with the void circle representing the ultimate nature of everything – namely, its voidness. So, through various steps of the *taiji* in its multitude of forms (despite the fact that *taiji* has been identified with changes through the history of thought), everything returns to its basic and original nature – voidness. The *tu*, thus, remains an object of meditative process, the instruction for the praxis of meditation and the way of purification of mind-and-body as the very foundation of our daily experience and the presentation of this process itself.

The various diagrams, in their historical development, gave priority to the graphical, imaginary abstractions in regard to the characters as a form closer to the "verbal expressions." Later, it became a form of psycho-spiritual self-education offered as a way of practice to the emperor. In the diagram, a dimension is presented that might be painted, known in deep meditation but not verbalized or known by pure knowledge. It reflects the Chan statement of the insufficiency of words, although later the diagram

became of secondary importance – it was used for visualization of the dimensions expressed in words. We might presume that diving into the diagram meant a specific bliss, although its transmission was reserved for the enlightened one. The texts and books were a medium for transmission of the Dao, but very often it was those very books and texts that obscured it as well.

In this regard, we are dealing with a specific know-how of the Way or principle, advocating an approach to self-cultivation based on the mind's direct intuitive grasp of the proper Way, which was directly opposed to an emphasis on the need for diligent study or the "investigation of things." Such a form of autobiography of spirit offers a different form of discourse, bound rather to the practice of life than to its various theoretical insights. Since the diagrams were forms of "cartography of the spirit," they pointed at relation of a direct nonverbal image of a spiritual experience as transmitted with a *tu* and the explanation of it, which, in its word-form, causes a shift to the rational level, whereas a *tu* still has an affective note. So, experience of a *tu* is happening on another level – not just on the rational one – and is relying on the doctrine of mindfulness as well as its emphasis on tranquillity.

We can see the diagram as an important tool in education and a creative reinterpretation of the Buddhist quest for transcendence over the mundane, but, at the same time, taking an active part in governing it – an original Neo-Confucian project, connected with serious ascetical practices deriving either from Daoist inner alchemy or the Buddhist path of ultimate personal fulfilment, based on a self-possessed, recollected state of mind, not allowing external objects through desires to the master's way. In the diagram – from the void, through multitude, back to the void – we see how the Confucian reality of manifoldness is embraced within the Daoist unity in the ruling dimension of the original form of everything – voidness.

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HIGHER EDUCATION
Inter-Faith Relations for Transformation

Jesudason Baskar Jeyaraj♦

1. Introduction

Inter-faith relations mean cordial and meaningful relationship among different religious communities. It includes understanding the faith and practices of others, appreciating the good elements in their culture and valuing the contribution of the people of other faiths towards establishing peace and harmony, restoring justice and the rights of people, and working together for the welfare and equality of all. Religions play an important role in building the nation. Religions are not merely limited to an individuals' faith or set of beliefs and performing rituals. They are closely linked to society, and influence its culture and customs. Religions are powerful in changing the lives of individuals and communities for better or for worse. Leaders of different religions can teach and lead the people to believe and observe superstitions and practise human sacrifices, *sati*, caste and racial discriminations. They even promote religious and social oppressions. Some of them flare up riots and conflicts between communities and fuel violence and bloodshed. Religions, thus, can threaten the peace and harmony among people and even destroy communities. On the other hand, religions can build a society by teaching good values, liberating people from all sorts of religious, social, and economic oppressions and bringing peace and harmony among communities within a nation. Many of us do not understand the positive and negative power of religions when used by their leaders or politicians for their own gain. A systematic study of religions at home, schools, colleges and the workplace can help the people to know the merits and demerits of religions and to meet the need of building better relations among faith communities. This paper is written to provide information to students who are not specializing in the field of religion, philosophy, or

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theology but for those who are doing their studies in arts, science, business, technology, etc.[1]

2. Study of Religions

A few Universities and Colleges have a Department of Philosophy and Religion and offer courses on major religions of the world. Some of them specialize in teaching a particular religion or tradition. Religions are studied as an academic discipline, requiring the students to learn the original languages of the scriptures such as Sanskrit, Arabic, Pali, Hebrew, Greek, or Latin. It requires the study of the history, sociology, and philosophy of religions, as well as the life and teachings of the founders. The study demands the skill of comparing and interpreting the scriptures or oral traditions and writing the exams or research papers. These institutions are interested in promoting the scholastic aspect rather than better relations between the religious communities. Quite often, religious studies are separated from ethical living in the western context.[2] A teacher or a student of a religion need not necessarily have faith and commitment and he or she can be an atheist, too. The high level of critical study of religions, using proper methodologies, is useful for the learners in the universities and colleges to earn a degree but may not relate to the grass root levels. On the other hand, religious institutions such as Vedic schools of the temples, Seminaries of the churches, Madrasas of the mosques, monasteries of Buddhism and Jainism teach religions, particularly their own religion in order to train priests, mullahs, and monks for religious services in temples, churches, mosques, etc. They train their students to be the leaders of their religion and to teach and defend it, perform the rituals and propagate it. They may teach religions other than their own to their students in order to compare and contrast, criticize, condemn, or appreciate, rather than giving importance to train them to build better relations with people of other faiths. Most of them limit their training to academic exercise and lack action programmes to develop inter-faith relations. In order to reach the masses, many Indian religious leaders

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[1]Christian scholars, both Indian and Western, have written a number of articles and books on inter-faith dialogue defending their traditional exclusivism or reasonable inclusivism or radical pluralism. In this article, I am pleading for inter-faith relations without compromising one's faith and spirituality but using them for social transformation.

[2]Paulos M. Gregorious, *Religion and Dialogue*, Delhi: ISPCK, 2000, 81-82.

started using TV channels. One can get teachings from the TV programmes on the scriptures or information about one's 'star', *jathagam*, astrology, numerology, gemology, *vasthusashtra*, the promises for that day or on divine healing, miracles, and rituals or prayers to be observed for prosperity. Some of these TV programmes are like opium for many TV watchers and lead them to become bonded slaves to wrong values, superstitions, fear, false pietism, and pseudo-spirituality. Some of them are really addicted to such programmes and some others are frustrated and disillusioned after following the teachings of the TV personalities for a few years. Many parents, unlike the parents of Jesus, Mahatma Gandhi, and Sadhu Sunder Singh, do not have knowledge of their own religion. Nor do have they time to teach the basic concepts and values of their religion to their children. Quite often the children are left on their own to watch the TV programmes like cartoons, sports, and music. Today's children are deprived of the teachings of their parents on good values and guidance on ethical living. They are let to draw whatever values they like from their peer groups and media. Families, as the basic unit of the society, are failing in properly teaching religions to their members.

Many Universities and Colleges in India are not interested in offering degree programmes for the study of religion and philosophy to promote inter-faith relations. A report prepared in 1967 points out the various reasons for the lack of instituting Department of Religious Studies, viz., India is a secular country and so the universities and colleges should be kept secular; the objective and critical study of religions could hurt the feelings of the respective religious communities; religious studies could be used for conversion and the institutions founded and aided by the government should keep the education free from religious instruction.[3] This neglect has resulted in educating students without developing their understanding of religions, respect for the culture of others and strengthening their spirituality and ethical living. The Kothari Commission recognized the consequences of the lack of religious studies in educational institutions, distinguished the 'religious education' from 'education about religion' and recommended the latter aspect of education about religions to be promoted in the universities and colleges.[4] The important question we

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[3]*Study of Religion in Indian Universities* (A Report of the Consultation held in Bangalore, September, 1967), 1-4.

[4]*Study of Religion in Indian Universities*, 4-8.

need to raise about the study of religions in institutions or families or through the media is this: Is the study of religion useful to the learners and society in building peace and harmony among communities and initiating socio-economic and cultural transformation of nations?

3. Religious Pluralism, Interactions, and Conflicts

'Pluralism' used in the context of inter-faith dialogue and relations refers to a multi-religious context of the society and to a position that rejects the claim of superiority of one religion over another. The pluralists believe that one religion cannot be the norm for the world and each religion must acknowledge the validity of every other religion.[5] Stanley Samartha points out four important values of pluralism: (1) It provides "spiritual and cultural resources for the survival of different people in their search for freedom, self respect and human dignity," (2) "a guarantee against fascism because it will resist the imposition of any 'one and only' religion or ideology on all people," (3) "an element of choice by providing alternative visions of reality and ways of life," (4) and "multiple spiritual resources to tackle basic problems which have become global today."[6]

The movement of people from one place to another within a nation or world has brought interactions among people. One's faiths, beliefs, customs, and practices influence others and, in turn, are influenced by others too. During these interactions people of other faiths and cultures accept the beliefs, customs, and cultures of the influencing people and incorporate certain elements into their lives. For example, when Aryans came with their Vedic religion and culture to India, they were able to influence native Tribals and Dravidians, and Sanskritized some of the aspects of the native religions. The Aryan religion introduced the *varṇāśrama* and divided the population according to their caste system. Applying the caste system, the Hinduism created a hierarchical social structure and a caste culture. This case is a classical example for how a religion can influence the society to the extent of creating a social order and caste culture. Felix Wilfred argues that the relationship of religion to

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[5]Narendra Singh, *A Christian Theology of Religions: Recovering Dialectical Method*, Bangalore: SAIACS, 2005, 3-4; Ken Gnanakan, *Proclaiming Christ in a Pluralistic Context*, Bangalore: TBT, 2002, 53-67.

[6]Stanley J. Samartha, *One Christ, Many Religions: Toward a Revised Christology*, Bangalore Orbis/SATHRI, 2000, 8-9.

society can be assessed by paying attention to various socio-economic layers and groups within the society itself and explains the way religious traditions and cultures of the dominant group such as upper caste and rich class are superimposed on the marginalized groups.[7] Religion can shape the society and culture for better or worse. When the Islamic empire and the British colonial rule were established in India, they influenced the local communities and left their culture deeply rooted in the Indian soil.

Further, some of the local people were being influenced so much by the faiths and cultures of the other; they convert themselves to that religion and culture. Conversion is a sensitive issue in the relationship between religions.[8] Without conversion, Christianity would not have developed from Judaism nor would other religions such as Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, or Sikhism not have emerged in this world. The positive aspect of the emergence of these religions and their spreading to other frontiers is the plurality of art, poetry, scripture, dress, food, architecture, sculptures, oral traditions, etc. But the negative result is division among people. Conversion to another faith happens either voluntarily or by force. Many Hindus belonging to upper castes converted themselves to Christianity to gain better spirituality and salvation.[9] Many Śūdras and Dalits joined Christianity, Buddhism, or Islam to liberate themselves from social bondage, caste discrimination, and poverty.[10] Many Christians in the West

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[7]Felix Wilfred, *The Sling of Utopia: Struggles for a different society*, New Delhi: ISPCK, 2005, 137-163.

[8]Refer to Sebastian C. H. Kim, *In Search of Identity: Debate on Religious Conversion in India*, New Delhi: OUP, 2005; Antony Copley, *Religions in Conflict: Ideology, Cultural Contact and Conversion in Late Colonial India*, New Delhi: OUP, 1999; Wilfred, *The Sling of Utopia*, 307-325; Ebe Sunder Raj, *National Debate on Conversion*, Chennai: Bharat Jyoti Publication, 2001, 44-51.

[9]The conversion and theology of some of the coverts from caste Hinduism are described in a number of books. For example, David Packiamuthu and Sarojini Packiamuthu, eds., *Tirunelveli's Evangelical Christians: Two Centuries of Family Vamsavazhi Traditions*, Bangalore: SAIACS, 2003. Pandita Ramabai, *A Testimony of Our Inexhaustible Treasure*, Kedgaon: Mukti Mission, 2001. Robin Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, New Delhi: ISPCK, 1994.

[10]Geoff A. Oddie, ed., *Religion in South Asia: Religious Conversion and Revival Movements in South Asia in Medieval and Modern Times*, Delhi: Manohar Publication, 1991, presents different cases of conversion to different religions. B. A. M. Paradkar, "The Religious Quest of Ambedkar," in T. S. Wilkinson and M. M. Thomas, ed., *Ambedkar and the Neo-Buddhist Movement*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1972,

converted themselves to Islam, Buddhism, the New Age movement, or even atheism. Voluntary conversion is a right of an individual or family. But forced conversion is a violation of individual freedom.

Some elements of the culture of a particular community were rejected by other communities as unacceptable either because their beliefs, religious laws, culture, and customs did not agree with such cultural, religious, and social elements of that particular community, or because they could be controversial and would adversely affect their own identity. For example, monotheistic religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam could not accept certain beliefs and practices of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. They are contradictory to their beliefs. However, they do not exist aloof. These monotheistic religions in India are also influenced by Hinduism that they practise caste and racial discrimination. They realize their alienation and try to indigenize their worship, festivals, and customs to be Indian than western. In the process of interaction and inculturation, each religious community gives some of its socio-religious and cultural elements to other religious communities and accepts certain elements from them. Yet, each community maintains the uniqueness of its faith, customs, and culture and exists as a distinctive community not being controlled or assimilated completely by any other religion.

The interaction and inculturation of religions and cultures are unavoidable today due to the movement of people, influence of the media, growing power of intellectualism, the longing for freedom of individuals, etc. However, we notice a clash of civilizations in different parts of the world.[11] Traditional religious communities fear that modernism threatens their identity, values, culture, and practices and could wipe out their religious and cultural traditions. Modern societies fear that some of the customs and practices cherished by traditional societies are based on superstitions, and outdated practices. They are hindrances for progress in today's world of science and technology.[12] The extreme pro-Hindutva

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30-31, describes the conversion movement of Dalits to Buddhism under the leadership of Ambedkar in Maharashtra.

[11]Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Penguin Book, 1997, 183-310; Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, New York: Bantam Books, 1990, 14-16.

[12]Meera Nanda, "How Modern Are We? Cultural Contradictions of India's Modernity," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41, 6 (February 11-17, 2006), 491-496.

people want their religious superstitions and inhuman practices, like ṣati and caste discrimination, child marriage and the secondary status of women to continue in the country. They want the *purāṇas* to be the basis for social, economic, and political policies and educational reform. Secularists and humanists criticize not only the ideologies of Hindutva but also the fundamentalism of all religions and their militancy and violence. Islamic leaders look at Christianity as a western political system and oppose Christianity and the western culture. They have failed to realize that Christianity and the western economic, political, and cultural systems are different. Christianity is criticizing the politics of the west and the culture of materialism and unethical living; so much is not noticed by the leaders of Islam and Hinduism. The crusades of the medieval period and the holocaust of killing millions of Jews by Hitler are stains in the history of Christianity. The clash between Islam and Christianity go on for centuries. The ethnic violence between Hindus and Muslims or Hindus and Christians in different parts of India and the clash between Islam and Christians or Islam and Judaism in other parts of the world remind us that there is a lack of proper understanding of religion among individuals and religious communities.

4. Inter-Faith Relations

Inter-Faith relations can be of different kinds namely Exclusivist, Inclusivist, Pluralist, Exoticist, and Particularist.[13] Inter-Faith Dialogue is not a comparative study of religion but an interplay of different faith experiences with the aim to foster mutual understanding, criticism, enrichment, and communion.[14] A formal education about religions in educational institutions is another means to enhance inter-faith relations. The need to develop other ways and means to promote relations among

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This article discusses the way Vedas, myths, superstitions, and astrology are interpreted as science, counter the Enlightenment.

[13]For an explanation of these terms and models of inter-religious relationships, refer Rudolf van Sinner, "Inter-Religious Dialogue: From 'Anonymous Christian' to the Theologies of Religions," in Joseph George, ed., *The God of All Grace*, Bangalore: ATC/UTC, 2005, 186-201.

[14]Michael Amaladoss, "The Challenges and Opportunities of Dialogue with Other Religions," in L. Stanislaus and Alwyn D'Soza, eds., *Prophetic Dialogue: Challenges and Prospects in India*, Delhi: ISPCK, 2003, 103-119.

religious communities in villages, towns and cities is a great need of the day for the following reasons.

4.1. Need for Inter-Faith Relations

4.1.1. Understanding Other Religions

We live amidst people of varied faiths and ideologies. We may like or dislike their way of life and practices. Some of us might have developed a negative opinion about the religious and social practices of our neighbours and alienated ourselves from our neighbours. Our bias and unwillingness to understand them have hindered the relationship with other local communities. We need to shed away our negative opinions and overcome the bias through a proper study of other religions if we want to develop and strengthen relationship with others. The more we try to understand their beliefs, worship, festivals, and teachings of their religion and culture, the more we can relate with them. Shallow and superficial understanding of religions of others is always dangerous. Understanding of others is a necessity. This does not mean accepting everything they believe and practice without a critical outlook. The true sense of understanding of the religions of others means willingness to learn about their faiths, teachings, and customs, appreciating the good values, accepting them as friends and continuing in cordial relationship with them. The relationship need not be for arguments and debates on the dogmatic aspects of religions. Quite often the trend of arguments can end up in breaking the relationship. One's willingness to see good aspects in other religious communities coupled with love and concern for humanity can strengthen inter-faith relations.

4.1.2. Reforming One's Own Religion

Learning of the religion of others can challenge one's own faith and practices. The knowledge of other religions can create critical reflection on our own religious faith and practices and lead to reform our religion. When Christianity, for example, came to India, it was challenged by the leaders of Hinduism. Indian languages, culture and music are influencing Christian worship and art even today. Robert de Nobili took several efforts to indigenize Christianity in the Indian soil. But his 'Mission' misunderstood him as if he was compromising with Hinduism. Both his 'Mission' in Europe and the Brahmins in India questioned the genuineness

of his indigenization.[15] Western missionaries such as William Carey, Caldwell, and G. U. Pope were fascinated by the richness of the Indian languages. They studied Sanskrit and Tamil and compiled grammar and dictionary for these languages and contributed to the translation of the Bible in Indian languages.[16] Indian *Bhakti* tradition of *Śaivism* or *Vaiṣṇavism* influenced the pietism of Christianity and enhanced the spirituality of Indian Christianity. Islamic Sufism influenced Sikhism and Zoroastrianism. Buddhism challenged Hinduism particularly the *Varṇa* system and some of its philosophical foundations and practices. Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi were influenced by Christianity so much so that they gave new interpretation to some of the philosophies and practices and brought reforms in Hinduism.[17] S. Radhakrishnan responded to the criticism of Christian scholars against Hinduism, reinterpreted Indian philosophy and defended Hinduism. Interaction of religions, if taken in a positive sense, can challenge and shape each religion. No religious community is perfect and can claim absolute holiness. Each religious community has to learn from the challenges of the changing context and reform their own religion. Reforming does not mean defending and becoming apologetic. It means evaluating the different aspects of one's religion in a critical way and modifying the philosophies, concepts and customs which are hindrances for promoting true humanism. God values human beings and their lives more than the rituals, laws, customs, and traditions which human beings have created in the name of God and made them as legal requirements. We have made many of our rituals and practices burdensome to people. Jesus Christ criticized the Pharisees and Priests for making Judaism a burden on the people. He pointed out that the Sabbath rest is made for human beings to enjoy relaxation and to refresh once a week and that the human beings are not made for the Sabbath. He reiterated that God prefers mercy, love,

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[15]Joseph Thakkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, Bangalore: CHAI, 1988, 2: 219-230.

[16]J. D. Douglas, ed., *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Michigan: Zondervan Publication House, 1978, 192.

[17]M. M. Thomas, in his *The Acknowledged Christ of Indian Renaissance*, Madras: CLS, 1976, discusses the response of Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, and Radhakrishnan to Christ. Further, G. A. Oddie discusses the impact of missionary work on Indian leaders in his *Social Protest in India*, New Delhi: Manohar Publication, 1978, 3-5.

and justice than sacrifices and rituals as Hosea and Amos pointed out (Hos. 6:6; Amos 5:25).

4.1.3. Maintaining as well as Risking Identity

Identity is an important social, religious, and political entity for people. Though people are identified by their names, each one of us carries multiple identities in terms of economic, social, religious, cultural, and linguistic groupings. Economically people are identified as rich, upper middle class, middle class, lower middle class, poor, and very poor, labourer, coolie, and beggar. Socially people are identified in terms of castes, tribes, race, and gender. Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Parsi, etc., are religious identities. Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Malayalee, Tamil, Kannadiga, Kashmeeri, Telugu, and Oriya are linguistic identities. Each of these different identities attached to an Indian plays a dominant role in different situation depending upon the context. The person uses it as he or she likes it. Others too use someone's identity either complimentarily or derogatively to refer to that person as poor or low caste, or primitive or illiterate. Identity, particularly religious identity, is a sensitive issue. The majority religious community in a country takes pride in their religious identity. The minority religious communities too are concerned about their religious identity because they are unique but are afraid to lose their uniqueness by the domination of majority religious community. Deliberately trying to eliminate the identity of a religious community or suppress it or marginalize it by another religious community hurts the victims and can arouse their protest or violent reactions. Each one should give due credit to another community and respect the identity of others. Whenever communities come together for relief work in emergency situations, charitable service, or social action, each community should be prepared not to project its identity and not to take the glory for the services. But they should be willing to tolerate, submit and even to risk the identity for the sake of accomplishing equality, justice, and progress of the people. Peace, harmony, and working together for good are more important than our own religious identities. Risking one's identity for a good cause could result in bringing more recognition to such a community.[18]

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[18]M. M. Thomas, *Risking Christ for Christ's Sake: Towards an Ecumenical Theology of Pluralism*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1987, 7.

4.1.4. Identifying the Oppressive and Liberative Forces

Religions teach good values and demand their adherents to practise the teachings. However, in the development of religions over a period, some of the interpretations of the scriptures, traditions, and practices become oppressive. Whoever introduced such oppressive elements and in whatever period in the history, these oppressive elements need attention and careful critique.[19] For example, the Pharisees and the Sadducees promulgated their own legal codes and introduced wrong interpretations during the time of Jesus, and he had to counter them as they went contrary to the revelation of God to Moses and the Prophets. *Sati*, gender discrimination towards women, and caste system are oppressive practices within Hindu traditions. Most of these oppressive elements might have been introduced at some time in the past and were justified as religious requirements. Permission to marry more than one wife to a maximum of four could have been a temporary sanction due to the death of many men in the tribal wars in Arabia during the early Islamic period. Unfortunately, these oppressive elements became normative teachings for the respective religions. In the course of time, however, reformers had emerged to counter such evil elements in different religions, so as to bring back the true spirit of life.

An ongoing identification of the oppressive elements in any given religion is important to challenge it. It is equally important to rediscover the liberative motifs within them in order to develop their liberation theology or philosophy from the scriptural sources and experience of people.[20] The interactions, like dialogues, can lead the religious communities to identity and recognize the liberative forces within each religion, and to facilitate using them for the purpose of liberation. They can apply the messages of their religion to liberate people from social, economic, cultural, and political oppressions. The interactions of religious communities could lead them to strengthen their vision for liberation and mobilize them to express their solidarity for the poor and the oppressed.

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[19]For example, W. R. Vijayakumar discusses the way *Mahābhāratha* went into various stages of development and editorial to suppress the counter-revolution of Buddhism to keep the hegemony of Hinduism in different periods of history. Tracing of similar redactional work in the textual development of the scriptures against the counter-revolution is an important area for study and discussion. "A Historical Survey of Buddhism in India," in Thomas , ed., *Ambedkar and the Neo-Buddhist Movement*, 4-14.

[20]Samartha, *One Christ, Many Religions*, 154-156.

4.1.5. Sharing Information and Acting Together

Information is knowledge and power. The more information we collect and analyze on the issues better can be our decisions and actions. Religious communities should meet periodically and share information about recent happenings in their own religious communities with others. They can inform the forthcoming festivals or special meetings or social services. The problems and difficulties related to the social or economic needs of a religious community can be shared with others; they could also seek the guidance and assistance of other religious communities. Political decisions of the Central and State Governments affecting a particular religious community can be discussed and voices of other religious communities in support of the affected community can be raised. Sharing and discussing the contemporary trends in society or in the world can enlighten the minds of communities and prepare them not to be carried away by wrong news or propaganda and restrain them from becoming furious and indulging in violence. Listening to the views of others from their point of view and at the interest of the nation (in terms of the common good) can strengthen relationship among communities.

4.2. Problems and Prospects for Inter-Faith Relations

Inter-faith relations can be promoted at different levels. Three levels of inter-faith relations can be identified. At the first level, inter-faith relations can be fostered by studying one's own religion and of others either in an educational institution or at a religious centre. This exercise introduces the learners and the learning community to relate with religions intellectually and more critically. The second level is to engage in dialogue with other religions. A deeper study of religions – in terms of their doctrines and practices – can help in dialoguing with others meaningfully. The third level is to involve in socio-political action programmes organized by religious groups to transform the society.

History teaches the need for unity and co-operation among religious communities. History stands witness to a multitude of problems resulting from religious antagonism: the conflict in partitioning India and Pakistan, the ongoing struggles between Muslims and Jews in the Middle East, fighting between Protestants and Roman Catholics in the Northern Ireland, Tamils and Singhalese in Sri Lanka, and among the tribes in Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Sudan are a few events to name. It is estimated that more than 6 million people die every year in different parts of the world because

of religious reasons. In spite of several hindrances, it is heartening to note that religious communities in different towns and cities have come together in times of natural calamities, riots, ethnic violence, and other critical periods in the life of the nation. Inter-faith dialogue forums, multi-religious associations, common prayer meetings, etc., have been founded in some places. They conduct peace marches, fund raising programmes for charity, human rights seminars, and involve in fact-finding study of violence against one or other group and send reports to the local government. So much can be achieved and enjoyed if we build better relationships among communities.

There are several problems in promoting and strengthening inter-faith relations. There is a fear and suspicion on the part of religious leaders that the doctrines and uniqueness of their religion and culture would be questioned and marginalized. They could be asked in the process of dialogue to change their interpretation, customs, and rituals. Their power, authority, and lifestyle could come under criticism. They may not be able to lead the religious communities as they like and cater to their vested interests. The superstitions, fake spirituality, meaningless practices, and oppressive elements could be exposed in inter-faith dialogues. Instead of maintaining the status-quo and the conservative tendencies, the leaders of religions could be expected to reform and revitalize their religions to give priority to secularism and humanism, to work for the liberation of the oppressed, and to establish justice and the rights of the marginalized. Many leaders take such a task as too much of an intrusion upon their domains, and feel threatened with regard to their positions and authority. This insecurity feeling tends to instigate such leaders to restrict their members from involving in inter-faith dialogues, attending multi-religious meetings, or co-operating with other religious communities for social and humanitarian causes.

However, the influence of media showcasing the clash of civilizations, terrorism in the name of religion, and bloodshed in many parts of the world make communities to think about the need of inter-faith relations. The technological developments in global communication, the process of globalization, and the international travel are helping religious communities to understand each other; they motivate them to explore possibilities for strengthening relationship among communities and promoting peace and harmony. Building relationship among communities will certainly gain importance in the near future.

5. Transformation

If transformation is mere evangelism and saving the souls or performing *karma* and rituals to attain salvation, then it is limited to souls and not to the materialistic life of human beings. Practising charity and giving of alms limit the transformation to social needs and make the recipient to depend on the giver for ever.[22] Socio-political actions limit transformation to changes in social and political structures but need not necessarily result in empowering the powerless. Each of these views of transformation is limited and incomplete. B. L. Myers criticizes various views on transformation, adopts a Christian standpoint on transformation, and argues for transformational development.[23] 'Transformational development' is a comprehensive expression to refer to socio-political, economic, and cultural changes of a society focusing on holistic development in the individual as well as the community. Religion can play a vital role in bringing holistic transformation in a society as it is closely connected with various aspects of the society. Religious leaders with their powerful teachings can transform the lives of families. With their critical analysis and the support of their institutions, they can question the political trends, leadership, and violations of justice and human rights. They can criticize the economic policies of the government which favour the rich and oppress the poor. Religions can identify the divisive elements which lead the people astray into communal clashes, and those moves which end up in degenerating the society into caste, gender, and racial discriminations. Religions can challenge the religious fundamentalism promoted through education and media, and call for the transformation of the curriculum of institutions and the media thrusts.

5.1. Basis for Transformation

5.1.1. Context Demands Changes

First, the context of socio-economic, political, religious, and cultural areas of a society demands continuous transformation. Socially, Indian society is caste oriented, particularly the southern regions of India. Practice of

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[22]J. B. Jeyaraj, "Social Action and Mission Challenges," in C. V. Mathew ed, *Mission in Context: Missiological Reflection*, Delhi: ISPCK, 2003, 142-163; J. B. Jeyaraj, *Christian Ministry: Models of Ministry and Training*, Bangalore: TBT, 2002, 136-138, 183-186.

[23]Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*, New York: Orbis, 1999, 91-120.

varṇāśramadharma has divided the society into several caste groups and further into untouchables (*Pāñcamas*) or Dalits. Racially Indians are divided into Aryan, Dravidian, Mangolian, and *Ādivāsis*. The social division of people on the basis of caste, race, tribe, and gender has led to several ideological groupings, ethnic conflicts, discrimination, and oppression. It has endangered the unity of people as one nation and threatened several times peace and harmony in our society resulting in bloodshed and vandalism. Economic context of the class society has widened the gap between rich and poor. Wealth is accumulating in the hands of 5% of the rich people while 45% are in the middle class and 50% are poor. Many of the poor people are living below the poverty line without having access to the basic necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter. The phenomenon of 'the rich becoming richer and the poor becoming poorer' leads to the perpetuation of poverty, unemployment, bonded labour, debt, malnutrition, and deaths and violence against the landlords, business people, and industrialists. Eradication of poverty and establishing justice for the poor and downtrodden are challenges to religious communities. Growth of religious fundamentalism and cultural imperialism sponsored by political powers backed up by religions threatens the secular fabric and peaceful co-existence of people.

5.1.2. Fulfilling the Teachings of Religion

Each religion, whether it has a written scripture or continues on the basis of oral traditions, has a set of teachings and practices that require the devotees to follow them faithfully. The basic tenet of the teachings of all religions is love of God for humanity, justice and equality, and empowerment of the poor and marginalized. Sometimes what happens in reality is that people pick up only those teachings that suit to their convenience and leave out the other teachings because they demand more rigorous ethical practices. It is easy to accept the teachings of giving alms to the poor or feeding the hungry but it is difficult to work for establishing justice and welfare by addressing the causes of injustice and struggling against the forces perpetuating injustice. It is easy to accept the teaching of dharma but difficult to fight against caste, racial, and gender discriminations. On one side, various religions admire nature or even lead people to worship nature through their teachings. On the other side, forgetting the teachings of their religions, people destroy nature and environment causing ecological problems and threatening the very

existence of lives on earth. Trying to show the love of God on the one side and making chemical weapons on the other side reveal our inconsistent stand in fulfilling the teachings of religions. Selective approach to the teachings of one's religions, if not for liberation and empowerment of the powerless, is dangerous because it is usually based on one's convenience. Theology and praxis should identify and uphold the liberative and oppressive elements of the teachings of each religion vis-à-vis the oppressive aspects found in the same teachings. The positive values of religious messages should be passed on to children by their parents at home. Furthermore, the parents and the religious leaders in temples, mosques, churches, and gurudwaras should take effort to teach the liberative and empowering dimensions of their religions. Of course, the mass media can play a vital role in promoting the positive elements of the religious teachings.

5.1.3. Vision for Nation Building

Building the nation with the values of peace, harmony, equality, and economic development demands the co-operation of all religious communities and different political parties. In India, the pre-independent period witnessed the growing spirit of achieving freedom and commitment to the causes of the nation. The recent trends in our political arena, however, show the declining spirit of patriotism and growing fanaticism of regionalism, communalism, and religious fundamentalism. RSS and VHP promote their ideology of Hindutva, by irrationally demanding that the Muslims must go to Pakistan or Arabia and the Christians to Rome. There are, of course, separatist tendencies among one or the other group, though it is not shared by any significant majority. Different religious outfits propagate for different kinds of nationalism such as religious nationalism, cultural nationalism and political nationalism emphasizing their one-sided ideology, which can divide the nation and lead it into disintegration. The main thrust of patriotism for a united, secular and democratic nation of India is under threat due to religionizing politics.

The impact of globalization is another factor that influences our younger generation not to stay in India and build it up.[24] Rather, many

[24]James David and John Desrochers, *Dimensions of Globalization*, Bangalore: CSA, 1998; J. B. Jeyaraj, "Globalization, Justice and Theological Response," *TBT Journal* (2004), 40-66.

scientists, computer engineers, technicians, nurses, etc., are leaving India to serve other nations. Concern and commitment for this nation among the present generation seem to be declining. This is mainly due to the fact that they could not get employment, enough salaries and challenges in their profession in India. An attitude of indifference to the problems of our society is increasingly present in them. Politicians tend to divide people for their own vested interests on the basis of dangerous foundations such as communal politics, ethnic violence, etc., which ultimately destroy unity, peace, and harmony among the people. We need to regain the vision for our nation and work to develop the true spirit of patriotism if we want to counter the evil forces. Inter-faith Dialogue on political ideologies and issues can enlighten the minds of religious leaders as well as their followers. They can instruct their own communities to have proper perspectives on the integration of the nation to prosper socially, economically, and politically.

5.2. Hindrances for Transformation

A number of hindrances for transforming our society can be listed from the social, economic, political, scientific, and technological points of view. From the perspective of inter-faith relations, however, three major hindrances can be listed. First, the biased attitude of religious leaders and their selective interpretation of scriptures and traditions for convenience sake is not only a hindrance for promoting relationship among religious communities but also for transforming the society.[25] They are not trained with the skill of critical analysis of the scriptures, traditions, rituals, and contemporary trends in the context. Lack of ignorance and exposure to the views of others has made them preach and teach oppressive doctrines. Second, the fear of entering into confrontation with the oppressive forces in the society such as money lenders, landlords, and political thugs that perpetuate poverty, illiteracy, injustices, and violation of human rights has made the religious communities turn their blind eye to the national problems. They are afraid of being persecuted or prosecuted and imprisoned. They not only suppress their conscience deliberately but also hinder transformation process at micro and macro level. Third, the

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[25]Susheela Bhan, "Inter-Faith Education for a Humane Global Order," in M. Mukhopadhyay , ed., *Education for a Global Society: Inter-faith Dimensions*, Delhi: SHIPRA, 2003, 20.

hesitation of devotees to question the biased attitude, selective interpretation, and deliberate negligence on the part of their religious leaders and unwillingness to reject the wrong values promoted by their leaders is another hindrance. Quite often, the voice of the people have led the leaders to rethink their teachings and, thus, to bring about reformation. Religious reforms for social transformation happened because at least a few lay people took the risk to question and challenge their religious authorities. Some of them faced harsh protests of the public and hatred of their religious leaders; some were excommunicated from their religions and a few others were even persecuted for raising their voices for reforms. Today, such radical thinkers for reforming religion and society either withdraw themselves to their own comfort zones or join hands with the leaders in oppressing the counter-culture. Or else, they are altogether ignored by their religious leaders. This unhealthy trend of withdrawing or co-operating for the oppression of the poor hinders transformation of our religion and society. If the leaders and their communities could join hands and take efforts for transformation, India can enjoy equality, peace, harmony, etc., as the fruit of genuine progress.

5.3. Agents of Transformation: Religious Institutions

In discussing the inter-faith relations for transformation, we should not forget that God is the main agent of transformation. God is the God of creation, orderliness, justice, and progress. God wants the unity of people and peace to be actualized. Religions teach us the way God acted in the history of humanity to transform faith, traditions, rituals and social life of people. God expects the followers to carry out the mission of transformation continuously and extends the power to the people to achieve it.

One of the powerful religious institutions, besides social, economic, and political ones, is the worshipping centres and ministerial training institutions of religions. Temples, churches, mosques, gurudwaras, synagogues, etc., are not merely centres of worship and performing rituals. Their mission is not limited to preaching and teaching of their doctrines and philosophies and charitable services. They are the agents of transforming their own communities. They have tremendous responsibility to build the nation with their doctrinal teachings, human and financial resources, and net-working services. The authorities of these centres should ask themselves the question of using their resources and power to

struggle against injustice, empower the poor and marginalized, protect the environment, and bring peace and harmony among the people. Christians, for example, should not forget the insights of the Bible that the churches are to be dynamic forces to transform the people and the society; the Gospels they accept as normative are holistic and demand social transformation. Why should we go on building temples, churches, mosques, dharga, gurudwaras, etc., either in small or mega size, in a private land or public land, on the roadside or on river banks or mountains? What is the use of such a structure for the socio-economic progress of the nation? Mere multiplication of these centres cannot transform the society magically. Direct involvement of the leaders and their religious communities in day-to-day affairs can only help the transformational process.

Institutions such as schools, colleges, and technical institutes are established and managed by the temples, churches, mosques, etc. Unfortunately, commercial gains dominate the establishment of many an institution. Some of those institutions even promote religious fundamentalism among students through courses, worship, and extra-curricular activities and justify caste discrimination and communalism. Some others want to provide various opportunities through their educational institutions to their own religious communities. They like to preserve their culture, strengthen their religious faith and rituals, and employ exclusively the members of their community. Whatever be their objectives, it is important that these institutions foster relationship among religious communities. They should not function to divide the people, endanger peace and harmony, and promote oppression and discrimination. Instead, they should contribute for the promotion of inter-faith relations, through their educational programs.[26]

6. Conclusion

Developing inter-faith relations in our society may seem to be a difficult task but it is not impossible if we educate and train the people through

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[26]Bhan, "Inter-Faith Education for a Humane Global Order," 32-38 discusses the goals and learning process of Inter-faith education in institutions and Steven Paul Rudolph, "School Curriculum for Global Peace: JIVA Experience," in Mukhopadhyay , ed., *Education for a Global Society*, 139-143 presents the courses produced by NCERT for inter-faith education.

proper channels and educational institutions. Each institution may introduce, for this purpose, at least the following programs for their students to achieve the three levels of inter-faith relations stated earlier.

1. Offering at least value based courses, if not a degree program on religion and philosophy, to introduce the history and teachings of religions, the importance of secularism and humanism and the value of cultures. Such courses could lead the students, on the one hand, to understand and appreciate other religions and, on the other, reform their own faith, tradition, and spirituality.
2. Organizing inter-faith dialogue meetings and inviting religious leaders to discuss common issues confronting the nation and threatening the peace and progress. Since religion is interlinked with society, politicians and economists, social scientists and activists can be invited along with religious leaders to discuss various vital issues in seminars participated by both staff and students. Karan Singh sees the importance of inter-faith relations and points out that the inter-faith movements should be brought to the centre stage in our society and the educational institutions should provide a sound platform for nurturing inter-faith movements.[27]
3. Requiring students to involve in the regular on-going social services carried out by other religious groups is the third level in addition to extending co-operation with the people of other faiths during natural calamities and relief operations. Such involvement can be organized by the centres for religions and inter-faith relations, if instituted already, or the National Service Scheme (NSS) or the social welfare department of the educational institutes. Providing opportunities to work with the people of other faiths for a common cause strengthens understanding and unity among religious communities.

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[27]Karan Singh, "Inter-faith Values for Education for a Global Society," in Mukhopadhyay , ed., *Education for a Global Society*, 4.

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MODERN METHODS OF COMMUNICATION FOR AN EFFECTIVE EDUCATION

Sebastian Periannan♦

1. Introduction: Three Stories as Take-off Point

The other day when my 5 year old niece spoke in her not-so-perfect English, I tried playing teacher and corrected her. Guess what she did? She looked straight into my eyes and said, "You did understand what I said, didn't you?" This incident made me realise that communication is all about getting the message across. With all due respect to my English teacher, the essence of communication is in the message, not so much the words.

The *Readers Digest* once contained this story about a ninth-grade health class: it was a class in which from the first day onwards the blackboard was covered with the names and locations of the major bones and muscles of the human body. The diagram stayed on the board throughout the term, although the teacher never referred to it. On the day of the final exam, the students came to class to find the board wiped clean. The sole test question was: "Name and locate every major bone and muscle in the human body." The class protested in unison: "We never studied that!" "That's no excuse," said the teacher. "The information was there for months." After the students struggled with the test for a while, he collected the papers and tore them up. "Always remember," he told them, "that education is more than just learning what you are told."[1]

It happened a few years ago at Loyola school in Chennai. The Jesuit principal was taking class for the final year students. One of the students was not that attentive in the class and he was busy doing something else during the class hour. Noticing the mischievous behaviour of the boy,

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[1]Philip Vinod Peacock, "An Education that Transforms," *The New Leader*, November 16-30, 2005, 19.

principal confronted him at the end of the hour, saw his note book what he has done and asked the boy to meet him the following day in his office. Quite sure that he would be asked to leave the school, the boy packed up everything to go home and said good-by to his friends. With the heavy heart and fear he entered the office of the principal. To his surprise and awesome experience, instead of sending the boy home the principal convinced the boy that he is too good in art and aesthetics, and added: "I have decided to send you to London School of Art." He went, secured a bachelor degree, and now he is working for a leading newspaper in India.

The first story tells that the teacher should use communication methods. The second hints that the students must learn from every source and resource. The third story reminds us to use our multiple-intelligence in education.

2. Philosophy of Communication

Communication is an art and science. It can be developed with some effort, some planning, and persuasion. That is why it is generally called a skill. In today's competitive world, good communication has a cutting edge. Though, what you know is important, how you communicate is more important.

> Communication is so basic to being human that some experts say, "One cannot not communicate." Whether we intend it or not, every word, action, gesture, and even silence is an act of communication. It conveys information to those around us. Communication touches upon all that we are and all that we do. Communication constitutes our inter-subjectivity. Through communication one becomes a full human and cultural being. Culture depends on the common sharing and participation by the members of a community. No community can be established or continue to exist without communication.[2]

Improved efficiency in communication enhances the quality of performance. Whether one is a teacher, manager, executive, banker, agriculturalist, social worker, or a politician he/she has got to be better in communication so that the ideas can be effectively passed on to the receiver with an effortless ease.

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[2]Granfield (1994), 2, cited in Wimal Dissanayake, "Communication in the Cultural Tradition of India," *Media Development* 30, 1 (1983), 27-30.

Starting from Ice Age, and passing through Stone Age, Iron Age, Agricultural Age, Feudal Age, Industrial Age, and Media Age, now we have come to Information Age. This age is chiefly characterised by information, communication, biotechnology, and bioinformatics.

2.1. Communication Technology

New technologies advance our standard of living by changing how we work and live. Twenty first century will be the knowledge century. The new economy will be the knowledge economy, as it includes the ability to create and disseminate knowledge and use it for economic growth and improved standard of living. Louise points out: "At the beginning of the 21st century, there are powerful new technologies reshaping our world including computers, electronic communication, jet and space travel, applied biotechnology, and atomic power and natural power. We are about to witness the beginning of the second information revolution: the mass popularity of the Internet which will link literate individuals into a global network of communication, commerce, and learning. This revolution will be far bigger than anyone imagines."[3]

3. Philosophy of Education at Crossroads

Wilbur Schramm encodes the philosophy of education from a communication perspective. The first educational pattern we look at is the kind that might have existed around the cave paintings: the family maintaining its ways of life by imparting them to the children. Then the most skilled persons in the community were co-opted to teach their special skills – hunting, sewing, and the like – to the younger people. Then came writing, and a few children were sent to learn to read and write as an aid to those who could not. This school for scribes extended into a school for religious and government service. In China, the preparation for government service turned into one of the most intensive and demanding systems of national examinations ever put into use, and it led to the preparation of many leaders for the government. In the centuries of the great virtuoso teachers, a few specially selected youths were given the opportunity of studying with them. The next step after the development of individually distinguished scientists and philosophers was the gradual

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[3]Victor Louis Anthuvan, "Church's Concern for the Marginalized," A Paper Presented at the CBCI General Body Meeting, February 8-15, 2006, Bangalore.

growth of universities and institutes of research and advanced study, in India and the Muslim states, beginning about 500, then in Western Europe, beginning about the twelfth century.

Two trends stand out from this pattern. Education began with the instruction of children, imparted by the family itself. Afterwards, education became increasingly elitist and selective. Whereas the earliest goal of education had been to maintain the status quo by teaching the children to walk in the steps of their elders, increasingly education came to be used rather to question the status quo, to improve upon it if possible, to add to knowledge rather than merely implanting it, and, especially with the philosopher-teachers, the research institutes, and the universities, to review and challenge the existing practices in the bright light of reason.[4]

3.1. Educational Challenges

Mahatma Gandhi believed that education should lead to the acquisition of a skill that offers employment. He set an example of work with his spinning wheel. As Gandhi said, the future of the Indian villages lies in the education of women and rural Indians.[5] At the same time, according to Ambedkar, education is a means to promote intellectual, moral, and social democracy. It has always been seen as a great mission, a very sublime mission. In the Indian context, imparting education is considered the greatest gift (*Vidyādānam mahādānam*) and the one who imparts education, the Guru, is as respected as God. Perhaps it is right to say that what we lack is not the political will but a persevering will.[6]

Tagore considered the recitation of holy texts part of the non-formal education of the masses. Celebration of feasts, performance of rituals, and the uttered or unuttered words and the symbols that go with them, had power to educate, inform, motivate, urge, heal, and unite individuals and communities. It was a powerful form of education of the masses.

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[4]Wilbur Schramm, *The Story of Human Communication: Cave Painting to Microchip*, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1988, 98-99.

[5]Thomas Menamparampil, "Catholic Education and the Church's Concern for the Marginalized," A Paper Presented at the CBCI General Body Meeting, February 8-15, 2006, Bangalore.

[6]Mirabelle A. C., "Catholic Education and the Church's Concern for the Marginalized," A Paper Presented at the CBCI General Body Meeting, February 8-15, 2006, Bangalore.

Educators must reach out to their students with warmth and affection. Emotional intelligence gives them an awareness of their own and others' feeling, and helps them to develop empathy. Spiritual intelligence helps them to break their mental rigidities, confront and tap the resources of suffering that come on their way, notice relationship between different things and happenings, develop a holistic view of reality, work against the inflexibilities of convention, be a leader who serves, have a high degree of self awareness, inspire others not by force or deceit but by vision and values, and be unwilling to cause unnecessary harm to anyone.[7]

3.2. **New Horizons of Education**

Present day education is not concerned with the total life of a person. It focuses mainly on the cultivation of academic knowledge and the skills needed to perform a suitable job in society. It aims mainly at the economic development of the country and the material prosperity of the individual. Success in life is equated with having a good job and earning a high salary and it is believed that these provide a high quality of life.

P. Krishna distinguishes four aspects of human life that education has to address: the physical, the intellectual, the emotional, and the spiritual. Unless education aims at achieving excellence in all the four aspects, it cannot be called holistic education. The emphasis in education, therefore, must shift from economic development to the larger concern of human development. Education must help a student achieve excellence in all four aspects of life. "Right physical development requires care of the body, cleanliness, exercise, right diet, adequate sleep, and medication as and when required. The spiritual aspect demands that we live in our body like a guest, carefully looking after it, not ignoring or ill-treating it, but at the same time not being too attached to it. Intellectual excellence requires cultivating academic interests, a high proficiency in languages, good expression, knowledge of current affairs, and a love of science, mathematics, art, and literature. Doing well at examinations should be a by-product of the intellectual development and not an aim in itself. The

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[7]Menamparampil, "Catholic Education and the Church's Concern for the Marginalized."

emotional development of the child requires the greatest attention from both parents and teachers."[8]

3.3. Communication and Education

Again, Wilbur Schramm describes the centrality of communication and education in human communication. It is an interface between cave painting to microchip. The story of human communication relates a history that began about 25,000 years ago when people of the earth emerged from prehistory and left us the oldest surviving records of their communication – the cave paintings and figurines. The story continues through the development of language, writing, printing, the mass media, and the ways of exchanging and using information that have made the recent centuries of human communication so distinctive – political communication and public opinion, scientific communication, mass entertainment, advertising and public relations, development communication, and new patterns in news coverage. It concludes with some thoughts on the importance of microelectronics, including the computer and space communication, and what an Age of Communication might be like if we indeed enter upon one. Approximately, half of all the professional communicators in the world are connected in some way with schools.[9]

4. Communication Methods

Communication methods are oral, visual, written, and electronic. These methods are subsumed into two, namely, oral communication and digital communication. Further, this can be explained in terms of communication revolutions in the following sequence.

i. The first revolution is writing. The combining of the phonetic alphabet for the production of communication with papyrus for its delivery led to a sharing of knowledge around the Mediterranean and to the beginnings of recorded history, plus tremendous advances in the arts and sciences.
ii. The second revolution is printing by Gutenberg. This paved the way for the renaissance, humanism, reformation, and mercantilism.

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[8]P. Krishna, "What is Holistic Education," *Wake Up India*, October-December 2005, 2-3.

[9]Schramm, *The Story of Human Communication*, xv.

iii. The third revolution in mass media combined a soaring production of paper and of printing for newspapers and magazines, with photography, telegraphy, and electronics joined to boost it to the global level.
iv. The fourth information revolution is entertainment, which brought escape in a package. People no longer had to create their own daydreams. They came readymade.
v. The fifth one is the transformation of the home into a communication tool shed. Television, video tapes, telephone, cinema, cable, fax, and satellite dish are stored, and communication beyond home is received and sent.
vi. The sixth revolution is the Information Highway marked by computer, internet, wireless, laser, robotics, and bioinformatics.[10]

Harvard's Howard Gardner, in his book *Frames of Mind*: *The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983),[11] suggests that there are at least seven human intelligences, two of which – verbal/linguistic and logical, mathematical – have dominated the traditional pedagogy of Western societies. The five non-traditional intelligences – spatial, musical, *kinaesthetic*, interpersonal, and intrapersonal – have generally been overlooked in education. We can develop ways to teach and learn by engaging all seven intelligences through the new communication revolution.[12]

The basic and the most important theory of communication is SMCRE, meaning, Source or Sender, Message, Channel, Receiver or Audience and Effect. The following table tries to breakdown this communication theory for the sake new methods to be adopted:

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[10]Irving Fang, *A History of Mass Communications: Six Information Revolutions*, Butterworth-Heinemann, MA: Focal Press, 1997, 240; see also Sebastian Periannan, ""Communication Formation of Church Personnel for Serving in the Information Age," *Third Millennium* 4 (October-December 2003), 52.

[11]Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligence*, New York: Basic Books, 1983.

[12]Angela Zukowski, "Formation of Church Leaders for Ministering in the Technological Age," in Paul A. Soukup, ed., *Media, Culture and Catholicism*, Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1996. 171-190.

Focus	Be aware of the given situation, problems, and prospects. On the long and short term objectives in education
Content	Intra-personal and Interpersonal skills. Methods of communication Communication, knowledge, attitude and participation
Target	All those in education All those involved in teaching
Style	Individual interest, group dynamics, Educational/communication technology to be used more exercise based
Methods	Informal and flexible program Communication methods Rigorous training and self-diagnostic
Results Sought, Effects	Effective communication of love, solidarity, efficiency, better results, and truth.
View of Organization or Institution	Personal interest in education Inter-active and integral responsibility through communication[13]

6. Different Models or Roles for Teaching

Teachers have to assume new roles in the arena of teaching. "Teachers can help young people access what they need from the vast array of information, and help them achieve better academic standards," says McNamara.[14] Adds Blow: "India is a country where use of information technology has become part of its culture. Youngsters automatically turn to technology as a cultural norm, which is why it's such an exciting place

[13]Adapted from John Adair, *Effective Communication*, Calcutta: Rupa & Co., 1997.

[14]Ruma Singh interacted with International Education Trainers, Sylvia McNamara, Andrew Blow, and Christine Olley when they visited India to discuss learning practices. Ruma Singh, "School for Thought," *Times of India* (Education Times), August 14, 2006, 4.

to be in today."[15] In the following paragraphs, I sketch a few different models to highlight what is meant by effective teaching. A description of four teacher roles has been presented by the Norwegian psychologist Ivar Bjørgen.[16] They are based on four different conceptions of what it means to be a teacher.

6.1. The Sculptor Model

The sculptor takes full responsibility for the presentation of all relevant material. He controls the schedule and the curriculum and controls the work of the students. He doesn't bother much about motivation, and considers it to be the students' responsibility to learn what he tells them. He devotes some time to help the weakest of the students, because this is part of his task. The dialogue in the classroom aims mainly at clarifying the presentation of the textbook and correcting students' work. The key words that involve in this model are presentation, structure, authority, teacher-centred, control, etc.

6.2. The Entertainer Model

The entertainer model considers that a teacher is much like an actor. She feels that it is her responsibility to arouse the interest and make it easy to grasp the central issues of her subject. She works with background and perspectives. She tries to establish an active dialogue with at least some of the students, in which she will be able to present and accentuate her view. She is genuinely interested in the subject and in doing a good job, mainly during the classroom performance. Some of the key concepts of this model are engagement, perspective, dramatisation, clarification, and entertainment.

6.3. The Coach Model

The coach believes that results depend on the work done by each of his students, and sees him as a catalyst for this work. He wants to know the background, conditions and capacities of each student, and to create an environment where they can achieve as much as possible. He informs them about the goals and the best methods, and discusses the programme

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[15]Singh, "School for Thought," 4.

[16]Ivar Bjørgen as quoted by Erling Ljosa, "The Role of University Teachers in a Digital Era," A Paper Presented in EDEN Conference, Bologna, 26 June 1998.

with them. He is clear about evaluation criteria, gives feedback and helps them in tackling all kinds of problems. What counts for him are the results of the students in relation to their individual capacities. The key words are companionship, planning, individual activities, support, and feedback.

6.4. The Manager Model

The manager looks at the classroom as a working place, and her task is to manage the joint efforts effectively towards the best possible result. Everybody should know how to learn, and she delegates tasks and responsibilities. She also employs various working methods. She is aware of individual differences, and uses much time in explaining what to do and why. She is a democratic leader and discusses strategies with her students, but she also knows that structure and management are necessary. This model concentrates more on the following key words: communication, information, co-operation, goal orientation, and efficiency.

Bjørgen's typology is based mainly on research from upper secondary schools, but is in my view relevant also for university and higher learning institutes.[17] Research has proven that person-oriented communication is more effective than any other means.

7. Concrete Communication Methods for Education

Amartya Sen envisions a reform in education in these words:

> There is much scope for reform in the existing public education system in India. Diversification in methods of teaching is imperative for the right kind of education being imparted to students. It is important to adopt a liberal education that does not undermine traditional methods of education, but works to improve upon it by omitting obsolete practices of pedagogy, in addition to introducing novel and empirical methods of teaching that cater to the emerging requirements of a modern democracy.[18]

Emerging types of Information Communication Technology (ICT) based learning and their influence on Education has a profound impact on the lives of students, teachers, parents, policy makers, politicians, and

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[17]Ivar Bjørgen, I A (1991): *Ansvar for egen læring*. Trondheim: Tapir, taken from http/www.teachingmethodology.com [22.08.2004].

[18]Amartya Sen, "A Liberal 'Edge'ucation," *Times of India* (Education Times), August 14, 2006, 1.

entrepreneurs. Looking at the field of open and distance learning we observe that quite different types of learning and teaching models are emerging. I use a fairly common classification of Information Communication Technology based learning models. Soggard reflects Edward R. Dayton and David A. Fraser who have suggested a simple model of "THINK-PLAN-ACT-EVALUATE," which is an excellent summary of strategic planning.[19] As teachers if we can go through this cycle again and again, reflecting and planning, it will lead to a systematic organization of the various parts and sections of our education and use of communication methods. In this whole process, if we can carefully evaluate whether we have done the right thing, then we have learnt the lessons.[20]

7.1. Virtual Classroom

Through audio and/or video conferencing, with connection in real time to one or more sites, it is possible to reproduce the classroom or lecture model, with the teachers and the learners in different places. The virtual classroom is usually teacher-centred, with the teacher/expert as the main actor. As in any ordinary classroom, the teaching strategies depend on the teaching model and the objectives of the teacher. The learners may use additional learning material, such as complementary information, practice, group sessions without the teacher, and self-assessment tasks. They can usually ask questions or intervene in other ways during the sessions

In my view, the success of the virtual classroom model depend on a shift of balance towards a more active use of the communication aspect of the technologies, and the incorporation of real time communication into a strategy with a wider range of learning activities.

7.2. Supported Self-learning

In the second type, supported self-learning, the strategies used are learner-centred. The learner explores them individually. The model is based more or less on the same tradition as in distance learning. Contrary to the previous type, the learner has access to core content of the course, at the convenient time and for as long as he/she can, using online or offline

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[19]Viggo Sogaard, *Media in Church and Mission: Communicating the Gospel*, Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 1998, 226.

[20]Sogaard, *Media in Church and Mission*, 226.

technologies. This model is very flexible as far as the place of learning is concerned. It is possible in this tradition to develop highly structured, pre-defined programmes of study. The success of the model will depend on its ability to incorporate and develop new options and strategies based on new generations of ICT.

One of the main roles will be to plan and prepare self-learning material. Another will be to provide supportive evaluation and communication, both related to pre-structured material and as guidance to students who are exploring new fields, structuring their own learning materials and project tasks. In the latter respect this model comes closer to the next one.

7.3. Collaborative Learning

Nowadays, the new technologies have made possible a rich horizontal communication flow. The learners are able to exchange information and experiences in real or not real time, as well as carry out common project work for both learning and operational purposes. The activities in a collaborative learning model arise when a group of people share the same goals, interest, needs, etc., and decide to work on these together. From there on all participants will contribute to the final product, which can be, for instance, a project report or a multimedia presentation.[21]

7.4. Participatory Method

Communication by definition is participatory. It is a two way process. Participatory communication transforms and empowers. "During World War II, Japan was virtually destroyed. Forty four cities were reduced to rubbles. Three million people were killed, later thousands died of malnutrition. Until 1949, the economy was in deep trouble. Yet, today Japan is one of the richest countries in the world."[22] This was achieved among other things by the participation of the Japanese government and people. Similar is the story with South Korea, whose industries are dominating many world markets. The teacher, students, parents, authorities, and stakeholders all must take an active part in the planning, decision making, and implementation of educational policies.

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[21]Bjørgen, *Ansvar for egen læring* (1991).

[22]A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, *Mission India: A Vision for Indian Youth*, New Delhi: Puffin Books, 2005, 3.

7.5. Interactive Method

Today we live in a world of easy answers. We do want to think and are ready to accept the conclusions that are given to us by mass media (especially print media and electronic media) and people around us. It is no wonder that we are so ready to accept that global capitalism is a good idea although we have experienced terrible poverty, unemployment, and the frustrations it brings to us. An education that transforms is not an education of easy answers but an education of questions that make us think.

According to a study of graduates at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, effective communication is one of the most important skills in achieving success in life. Nearly all successful people have the ability to "get along" with others. In other words, they have good interpersonal communication skills. Recently, six Fortune 500 companies conducted a study of 191 top executives to find out why managers fail. They conclude that the biggest reason for failure is poor interpersonal skills. The Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina, USA, estimates that 50 percent of all managers, and 30 percent of all senior managers, have some kind of difficulty in dealing with people. The same is noticeable in the educational field too.

We need to be willing to study the discipline seriously and apply its principles to the way we communicate. The following are some aspects of communication that are to be kept in mind for effective interactive mode of education:

1. Communicate with an open mind; never be prejudiced while communicating.
2. Keep the dialogue open; encourage interaction.
3. Do not over react. Do not get unnecessarily awed by the personality of the receiver/s.
4. Communicate in a pleasant way; even an unpleasant truth should be communicated in an acceptable way.
5. Believe in what you say, own up your statements and stand by them.[23]

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[23]E. C. Eyre, *Effective Communication Made Simple*, Calcutta: Rupa & Co., 1985, 142-214.

7.6. Method of Networking and Team Work

Today we find that education offers promotion towards conflict and competition rather than cooperation and team building. The milk man of India, Varghese Kurien says: "It was by chance I became a dairy man." He heard, it is said, British experts say that the sewer water of London is superior to the milk of Bombay. This served as a challenge to young Kurien, who started the Anand cooperative dairy project in Gujarat in the 1950s. He has taken "dairying from strength to strength over the decades so that India is the world's second largest milk producer."[24] Networking and team spirit is one of the weak areas in India. Many Indians are very good as individuals but when it comes to collective effort situations become chaotic. Infosys Chairman Narayanamurthy, however, is an exception and he insists on networking and team spirit.

7.7. Advocacy and Value-based Method

Advocacy communication offers an exchange of good will, sharing of views, fostering commitment, and promoting common good of all citizens. Abdul Kalam, the President of India, asserts: "The best part of a person's life is the learning years in school. Children need value based education and mission oriented learning with value system. If the child misses the value based education of the school campus, no government can establish a society with integrity."[25] The values that we impart in the educational system, I mean values of hard work, honesty, cleanliness, sharing, solidarity, law abiding, and God loving alone can save a nation.

7.8. Presentation as Method

Research on how technology affects young children in learning situations seems to be positively in favour of using computer technology.[26] Presentations are addresses to an audience using audio-visual aids and usually involving more than one person working together as a team. You need to be able to take an effective part in a presentation and know how to lead such a team. There are six pillars of success advocated by the International Academy for creative teaching.[27]

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[24]Kalam, *Mission India*, 21.

[25]Kalam, *Mission India*, 66-67.

[26]Sogaard, *Media in Church and Mission*, 217

[27]International Academy for Creative Teaching (IACT), "Bulletin" 52 (2004), IACT Towers, Bellary Road, Hebbal, Bangalore 560 024.

1. PROFILING the occasion, the students/audience, and the location allows you the strength of fore knowledge. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. In this context it is the way to apply the principle of 'Be Prepared'.
2. PLANNING your presentation, with a structure of general points supported by detail, will give you the framework for success.
3. SELECTING the right visual aids is a major step towards ensuring that your presentation is going to be effective. Make certain that any visual aids you use are clear, simple, and vivid.
4. PREPARING your talk embraces both committing what you are going to say to your short-term memory and preparing any prompt notes. You should aim to talk without notes. Seldom if ever should you read from a script.
5. REHEARSING or practice is a recipe for sources. It builds confidence before the actual performance. Included under this heading is checking out that the 'stage management' aspects of the presentation are all in place.
6. DELIVERING the presentation calls upon your effective speaking skills of being clear, simple, vivid, and natural. Look after the main ideas and the words will look after themselves. Imagine yourself as leading your audience on an interesting, exciting, and potentially fruitful journey. "Fail to prepare; prepare to fail." The best way to beat nerves is to build your confidence. The foundations for confidence are laid before your presentation begins but you may still have to act confidently on the day. For an effective delivery, the following visual aids are being used by taking into account the personal skills, available resources, the nature of the audience, and the speech setting: Slides, Object, Handouts, Chalk Boards, Overhead Transparencies, Posters, Models, Flip Charts, Marker Boards, Projected Computer Graphics, Computer and LCD projectors.

7.9. Non-verbal Communication as a Method

Communication consists of (i) the presentational language of our bodies and (ii) the representational language of things, visuals, icons, and what we call symbols. Here are a few examples for non-verbal communication method which occupies 65% of our human communication.

Method	Examples
Facial expression	a smile, a frown
Gestures	Movement of hands and body to help to explain or emphasise our verbal message
Body posture	how we stand or sit
Orientation	whether we face the other person or turn away
Eye contact	whether we look at the other person or not, and the length of time that we look at the other person
Body contact	a pat on the back, an arm around the shoulder
Proximity	the distance we stand or sit from the person
Head-nods	to indicate agreement or disagreement or to encourage the other to go on speaking
Appearance	physical grooming and choice of clothes
Non-verbal aspects of speech	variations of pitch, stress and timing, voice quality, and tone of voice (these are sometimes called 'para-language')
Non-verbal aspects of writing	handwriting, lay-out, organisation, neatness, and visual appearance generally

All these non-verbal elements of communication are sometimes called 'meta-communication'. The Greek word 'meta' means 'beyond' or 'in addition to'; 'Meta-communication' is, therefore, something 'in addition to the communication' and we must always be aware of its existence.

It is essential to remember that the meta-communication, which accompanies any message, is very powerful. The receivers will use these clues to help them to interpret what you mean, but more importantly they often take the meaning from the meta-communication rather than from the words themselves, particularly when, what you are saying conflicts with what you are doing. If, for example, you are angry but trying to hide your anger you must be aware of your body posture, the way you use your eyes, gestures and facial expressions, and the tone of your voice, which may well give you away. Similarly, in writing, the 'tone of your voice' may show.[28]

[28]Eyre, *Effective Communication Made Simple*, 142-214.

7.10. Narrative Style

Why do teenagers go to the cinema? Above all, because they are "looking for themselves," according to educational theorist and psychologist Bruno Bettelheim. No one has pointed out more clearly than the great value of stories: "fairy stories to make the consequences of our actions visible," and the cinema, "which can have the function of the great art of every period – the moral function."[29]

Traditionally, stories were used to store, organize, and communicate much of what is known to the collective memory. Stories were passed on from generation to generation, providing a continuity of knowledge, social identity, and shared experience. Special techniques including games and songs were used for children's stories, which have had a strong impact on their mental and emotional development.

7.11. Use of Alternative Media and Group Media

We need to use alternative media or group media or low cost media such as drama and puppetry in education. Alternative media have people as their focus and, hence, they are people's media. This will be communication for change. They are rooted in the social processes for change. It is marked by content for change, a participatory, democraticised, and communitarian form, a two way, top-down flow, and audience/students who are potential agents of change.[30] Alternative media is very useful for non-formal education.

8. Conclusion

The best teacher is the one who inspires his students with his knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. The best student is the one who perspires through hard work, sincerity, and determination. The best parents are those who aspire for a better world for their children through their cooperation, sharing, and guidance. As a whole, governments or NGOs must promote scholarship, excellence, and stewardship through their, planning, good will, and resources.

There is no one perfect model or method offered for an effective education. We may follow one or more, or a combination of all of the

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[29]Schramm, *The Story of Human Communication*, 35.

[30]Pooranam Demel M. X., "People's Media: An Alternative in Information Bulletin" (3/1993), Catholic Media Council, Aachen, 2.

above discussed methods. The crux of the matter here is one has to be "interested" in the subject matter. Personal and collective interest, awareness of resources, analysis of the situation, and participation are the surest and simplest methods for effective education. If the interest to teach is there for the teacher, and the interest is there for the student to study there comes the method. Communication method is all about our interest, enthusiasm, awareness, analysis of our own skills, techniques, resources in imparting knowledge, character, exchange of news, views, opinions, and wisdom in a better and effective way. Thus, education becomes a pleasure-based joyful venture for the humanity at large.

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RELIGION AND EDUCATION FOR LIFE

Anto Amarnad♦

1. The Magnitude of Religion and Education

History has never been stable in reporting what is barely optimistic in the genuine development of humanity. But, it has always been an accumulated record of the ups and downs in human progress that expressed the genuineness and hypocrisy, goodness and wickedness of the human spirit. History, in ancient times, was more or less concerned with the annals of kingdoms, religious activities, and occasionally about the narrations of revolt and revolution in human societies. However, in ancient times, the religion had the central role to play in human life by determining and controlling men and women and the society from within and outside, and most of their activities. Consequently, religion played scores of roles for giving purpose and meaning to each human being. When people with moral and affirmative outlook controlled the religion, it constantly guided men and women for the constructive augmentation of everything that was genuine. But when the institution of religion was controlled by the immoral and selfish minds, the outcome became too pathetic and destructive for human integrity and dignity. Thus, history of religion was swarming not only with constructive events but also with negative episodes. Paul Johnson, in his famous book *Psychology of Religion*, wrote:

> In the name of religion what deed has not been done? For the sake of religion men have earnestly affirmed and contradicted almost every idea and form of conduct. In the long history of religion appear chastity and sacred prostitution, feasting and fasting, intoxication and prohibition, dancing and sobriety, human sacrifice and saving of life in orphanages and hospitals, superstition and education, poverty and wealthy endowments, prayer wheels and silent worship, gods and

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demons, one God and many gods, attempts to escape and to reform the world.[1]

Comprehending this observation, we are forced to include in religion every aspect that emerges in our everyday life, at the personal as well as societal levels. We perceive that religion sometimes becomes too human and thereby loses its proper balancing of the vertical and horizontal dimensions. Consequently, we improperly imagine that the religion is something that includes also ignoble and selfish elements. If it is so, surely, scholars like Friedrich Nietzsche could tell us that "we (you and I) have killed God and religion. All of us are His and its murderers!"[2]

But can religion go that far to include even the desecration of human dignity, holiness and righteousness? No! Religion stands for all that is inspiring and splendid in human life. It never leads to vicious deeds and ignoble thoughts that vandalize human goodness and integrity. The imperfections are to be noted as the signposts for improvement, reformation and purification of human consciousness and worldview. Certainly, the great human endeavours have always brought refinement in the human consciousness and its integral progress. They have set a path for greater realizations and achievements in the process of man's optimistic growth. Here, one experience has not only perfected the other but also has breached the well-accepted norms and has deviated from the legitimacy of positive growth. But, certainly, what we search for within religion are not perversions but inspirations.

Religion looks at all seasons of human life and remains with man as a sign of search for perfection and as a dream for immortality. Religion is man's action in understanding his higher longings and knowing his immortal soul. In the civilizations of the world we find that religion and instruction (education) always existed side by side in perfecting the human spirit against all erroneous activities. Religion was considered as the principal human endeavour until the modern times. From the time immemorial, we find that the institution of religion, with its otherworldly reserves, has brought man the dimensions of transcendence and spiritual awareness as its natural legacy and has guided the human consciousness for its noblest achievements. Its focus has always remained on the Divine

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[1]Johnson P. E., *Psychology of Religion*, New York: Abingdon, 1959, 47-48.

[2]Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Viking Press, 1968, 125.

and the highest possibility of human holistic growth, especially in the realms of spiritual, moral, and communal life. Hence, any true education in primitive and pre-modern times was understood as something that led towards knowledge of God (*Brahmavidya*). Humans believed that it is the knowledge of God that has always perfected them and made them successful in all their accomplishments. Today, however, we find that education has distanced itself from the religious sphere and has preferred to dress itself in absolute secularity. Therefore, in recent times, professionalism and excellence in education are measured by an ability to be totally free from religion.

2. Education: A Primeval Original Being!

We are forced to believe that the field of education today has been identified with the *Adi Purusha* (Primeval Original Being) that made people into Brāhmins, Kṣatrias, Vaiśyas and Śūdras.[3] The mouth, hands, thighs and feet of education determine the different types of working classes, their roles and respective identity in the post modern society. If you are not able to catch up with the heavy financial burden of the topmost professional courses and if your intellectual acumen does not tally with the demands of these courses, you are naturally kicked out from the relay and condemned to stay back like a Śūdra (servant or slave)! Education determines today much of the future of an individual and his/her style of living. Anyone can opt for this race to create for him/her an unprecedented future. With gargantuan greed a lot of youngsters and their parents restlessly search for every possibility of winning the competitive world in the tensed pavements of their heightened dreams. In this race nowhere appears a transcendental Being that can inspire the seekers for the deliverance of their souls from the mundane sufferings and vulnerabilities and to lead into a world of eternal bliss. There are no supernatural goals set ahead for these young men and women that would guide their lives and actions. In our modern times, it seems that men and women have reduced

[3]Castes are alluded to in the Ṛgveda, only in the more recent passages (e.g., Book X), which mentions the mythical origin of the four social classes (from the primordial Being's mouth, hands, thighs, and feet): the Brāhmaṇa (priest), the Kṣatriya (warrior-ruler), the Vaiśya (farmer and merchant), and Śūdra (servant or slave). The famous hymn 90, *Puruṣa-sūkta* (vv. 1-12), reveals that the four classes originally emerged respectively from the mouth, the arms, the thighs, and the feet of the *Puruṣa*, the primeval Man (the one with 100 heads, eyes, and feet).

the aspect of religion into the categories of Yoga, meditations and tension reducing exercises. Religion has become yet another business commodity capable of providing monetary advantages, luxurious relaxation, and change.

In traditional societies and civilizations religion remained always pivotal and controlled almost every aspect of life. By rejecting the traditional dimension, the humans try to have better freedom and hope for a new world order. The key brainwave for this new world order seems to be the educative system itself. Modern men and women want to forget easily the past traditions, values, and convictions because these aspects are not convincing them enough to structure a new global family and to breathe freely the modern spirit. They believe that they can shape a better world with the post-modern education devoid of religion. This new confidence has in its centre individual freedom, knowledge, pleasure, and material prosperity. Education has started determining the society's own values, customs, and lifestyle. Ten years ago a nineteen-year-old youth in India could never support and manage a family with his earnings that came from his employment. But today many families are being supported and managed by the income of these youngsters who work day and night in IT industries, call-centres, etc., and earn a big amount of money. He is flush with money, variety of electronic gadgets and expensive clothes. Money determines what is right and wrong in the society. The ambience of family is changed by the secular wave of the times. The higher education provides better money power and people hunt for large sum of money to go for that higher education and, thus, to bring prosperity in life. Education is approached with greater awe and expectations as if one approached a great deity for boon and wellbeing. In former days, education was serving the society's structures and values but now the society serves the 'golden calf' of educational structures and secular values because the modern man believes that education contains a better future and adequate significance for his life on earth.

3. Uprooting Transcendence

Is it an attempt to uproot human beings from the spiritual and transcendental dimensions and reduce them merely to the status of finite creatures who crawl merely with the mundane preoccupations unattached of supernatural dimension of their human vocation? Only when the education system becomes an authentic service to humanity in building up

the higher and transcendental needs in man, we can expect of a real solution to the existing challenges of our time. The higher and transcendental ideals and values must stay not only in the domain of religion but also in every venture of man, particularly in the field of education. Religion and education are the decisive dimensions to make humanity ascend the higher horizons of genuine divine-human integration. When education is meant to 'lead out' from ignorance to knowledge and wisdom, religion is meant to 'lead into' the inner realm of the human and, thus, to reach the heights of immortality and eternal bliss. While education fundamentally leads to the joy of enlightenment, religion is the way to live the wisdom and inner happiness. Both education and religion have their abilities to refine human consciousness and, thus, to perfect the ultimate meaning in human life. Therefore, education within a religion should be seen not as a simple story telling romance but must be all the more an integration of creative and dynamic instructions and formation on divine and human realities to achieve profoundness of human vocation.[4]

According to Gary D. Borich, there are three domains that come under any education programme: cognitive behaviours (meant to develop intellectual abilities and skills), affective behaviours (to develop the attitudes, beliefs, and values), and psychomotor behaviours (dealing with co-ordination of physical movements and bodily performances).[5] Education is, thus, an act of integral growth. Lawrence Kohlberg maintains that "the aims of education may be identified with developments."[6] This development will take care of social, moral, and aesthetic areas in human beings pointing to an integral growth. According to the religious point of view, the purpose of education is the maturity of the human beings from within, freeing them from those conditionings which would prevent them from becoming fully integrated. The domain of religion is, therefore, very much connected to the interior world, which is seen as the matrix for all human thinking, judging, and acting. This matrix is connected to the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor realms to perfect every act and attitude. Religion prefers to understand this inner world as a sacred space

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[4]Anto Amarnad, *Creative Catechesis: A Creative and Psychosocial Approach to Faith Formation*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2000, 67.

[5]Borich G. D., *Effective Teaching Methods*, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992, 119.

[6]Kohlberg L. and Mayer R., "Development as the Aim of Education," *Harvard Educational Review* 42, 4 (November 1972), 493.

where the divine dwells. The presence of the divine guides and inspires human beings to choose what is right and to avoid what is wrong. The discovery of this indwelling presence is the highest knowledge as far as the religion is concerned because this knowledge frees man from inner bondages and empowers human spirit to aspire for higher realizations in life. Thus, every educative process is something that leads to self-discovery and a discovery of the divine within human beings. Without being synchronized with the individual self and supernatural Self, humans will never experience wholeness and excellence. A step further, the possessors of this 'self-divine' illumination will discover God amidst their life contexts and in their fellowship with other human beings. According to D. S. Amalorpavadass, the intention of religious education consists in "the dynamic procedures in which a group of believers are guided with due respect for their freedom, to meet and discover God in the midst of their life situations and understand His designs through the instructions and interpretation of sacred Scripture."[7] Hence, the religious dimension in education opens up the whole panoramic vision of considering both the divine and human elements in synthesis. This fusion of natural and supernatural in man perfects his growth and integrity.

4. Religion: From an Insider's and Outsider's Point of View

We can explore religion from an outsider's or an insider's point of view. An outsider will find religion as opium that tranquillises human mind for a while but allows the sore of human predicaments to remain unhealed. Religion, according to this point of view, is only an expression of culture of death and exploitation that will continue to take advantage of the frail human beings. For that reason, according to this view of point, the religion is not a permanent solution for man's dilemmas and distresses. Man will continue to remain in his finitude and suffer the perdition carrying all his grief and existential whimper. With this condemned state of affairs there seems no chance for him for a better morrow. This man assumes that the transcendence and supernatural are only some incredible false metaphors cooked up by manipulative minds with vested interests. He believes that death and tomb indisputably become the ultimate legacy to his ill-fated

[7]D. S. Amalorpavadass, *A Survey of One Decade of Catechetical Renewal in India*, Bangalore: NBCLC, 1973, 7.

being on this desperate planet. Indeed, the outsider's future is too grim and gloomy by his negative attitude on religion.

But, to an insider's point of view, religion is an enlightenment that refines one's outlook, aspirations, dreams, and achievements, promoting the spiritual wellbeing and eternal happiness. This point of view will never lead to a milieu of utter helplessness amidst the struggles and agonies of life but will open an access for ecstasy in favour of newer realizations and significance. Religion is not opium here but an enduring and effective medicine that cures all his problems and miseries. At this level, man is a collaborator who is invited to participate in the infinite realm with his supernatural destiny. God is the horizon for his growth and integrity. Every moment is a gift of celebration of life focussed to higher vision and achievement. This planet earth becomes the most graceful abode for all positive and privileged realizations and man becomes naturally thankful to God who is the protector and provider of his life and accomplishment. The aspects of transcendence and supernatural become part of his natural inheritance. Death and tomb become never the culmination of his life but the beginning and a passage to a new mode of existence that opens up unlimited possibilities of life and eternal delight. Indeed, the insider's future becomes bright and optimistic by his positive attitude on religion.

Religion is a value-laden reality. It is an important and influential ideology existing alongside its secular alternatives. Within everyone there are dimensions of sacred and secular. Religion and the world of secular concerns represent both these experiences within him. Man sees within him a sturdy separation between the sacred and secular elements. There is also a big gulf between religion and secular world. Religion escapes where secularity starts measuring the profits, prestige, possession, pleasure and this-worldly anxieties. Religion has its own world of goodness, justice, compassion, self denial, and other-worldly orientation. To help man acquire these positive values religion carries with it myths and sacred stories. The reflection and digestive contemplation of these faith generating sacred truths prepare man to balance between the heaven and earth. The secular world tries to remove, layer after layer, the truth of human and divine life folded tight in the myths. It demythologizes the delicate stories of religion and steals from man his natural taste for wonder and supernatural longings. Thus, man is devoid of the milieu of infinite and invisible and he becomes simply the spectator of his imperfect and egoistic vision. The truth is shrouded in myths and if we remove its veil

then it would escape from our privileged comprehension. The supreme truth resides poetically in the religious myths and religion provides them to help man see the truth with its magnificent beauty. Human soul thirsts for this ineffable beauty and so every venture to uproot sacred stories is detrimental for man's ultimate growth.

5. Religious and Secular Models for Life

Theistic religions consider that the source and origin of every being is God. God could be described as "spirit, consciousness, life, intellect, love and liberty."[8] By the principle of proportionality, each being according to its degree, participates in the perfections of God. Ontologically speaking, man, as a finite being, is composed of two really distinct but strictly complementary principles: *Essence* and *Existence*. "Essence is that which makes a being that which it is. Existence is that which makes a being exist, which makes it real."[9] One can trace the description of same duality in Teilhard de Chardin when he distinguishes a *without* and a *within* aspect in all material beings. The *without* corresponds to the material aspects of reality which are observable and measurable. The *within* aspect, he explains, is the presence of consciousness which has the property of awareness of objects and of oneself.[10] In order to know man as a religious person we should adopt an approach that respects the essence and existence aspects, the *within* and the *without* dimensions in man. Therefore, man cannot be viewed as a purely secular being but he is all the more a religious being. The atheistic views consider man just as a result of evolution and as an organism set forth for accumulating the materialistic prosperity and secular achievements. Excellence, objective perfection, unlimited freedom, and reputation are the most important values in this worldly life. The Earth is the finality of all actions and accomplishments.

Human life, however, has to be understood as an amazing project which is framed with various values and attitudes. They come from age old traditions and beliefs. Without a conscious choice, perhaps, these archetypes play a very important role in the behavioural pattern of human

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[8]J. F. Donceel, *Philosophical Anthropology*, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967, 15.

[9]Donceel, *Philosophical Anthropology*, 7-8.

[10]Teilhard De Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, New York: Harper & Row, 1959, 56.

beings. Depending on the central concern of each person, these sets of values turn out to be *secular* or *religious* ones. They emerge as a consequence of childhood impressions and parental upbringing at home. Let us make a comparative analysis of the religious and secular models to explain the role of guided principles in human development.[11]

GUIDED PRINCIPLES	RELIGIOUS MODEL	SECULAR MODEL
Aim of life	Reach heaven; attain eternal life	Meaningful realizations
Aim of education	Become God-fearing man	A rational being
Highest value	Spiritual happiness	Well-being and happiness
Moral concept	Observe Divine Law	Relativism/subjectivism
Source of meaning	From believing community	Individual fulfilment
Sense of reality	Unity of God, Humanity, Religion, and Knowledge	Pluralistic and diverse
Attitudes to humans	Co-pilgrims	Self-sufficient being
Attaining knowledge	Knowing and divinization	A goal in itself
Source of knowledge	Revelation	Reason and experiments
Controlling factor	Authority	Rational autonomy
Attitude to faith	Certainty	Doubt, critical openness
Approach to religion	Committed faith	Scepticism
State of mind	Submission, reverence	Ambition and pride

The striking differences of sacred and secular models show us about the influence these realms have upon human mind and human behaviour. The religious model shows us the positive values of human becoming

[11]This Table is an adapted and modified version of J. M. Halstead's findings on Muslim voluntary aided schools. See J. M. Halstead, *The Case for Muslim Voluntary-Aided School: Some Philosophical Reflections*, Cambridge: The Islamic Academy, NY, 20.

whereas the secular model focuses more on the human dominance, independence, and rational pre-eminence. Certainly, religion is not meant to jeopardize human autonomy and independence but to help man integrate his diverse experiences on earth and, then, direct them towards greater augmentation and integrity. Teilhard de Chardin considers that man contains the possibilities of the earth's immense future and can realize more and more of him on condition that he increases his knowledge and love.[12] This knowledge and love are precisely the gifts of the religious model. Lonergan believes that "Since finality is an upwardly but indeterminately directed dynamism and since man is free, the real issue lies not in the many possibilities but in the few principles on which man may rely in working out his destiny."[13] Here, again, religion unfolds the reliable principles and a higher destiny for man. According to Merleau-Ponty, "Man is a being which continually expresses itself. Man expresses himself in behaviour, in work and play, in art and science, in philosophy and religion. Man's self-expression is a development of his original involvement in Being."[14] Religion prepares a background which would ultimately provide man's involvement with God and with the world.

6. Provision for Self-Direction

When the whole process of religious involvement reaches out to the totality of man's life and its concerns, the education simply cannot discard the scope of religion. Education should integrate the most powerful dimension of religion and its concerns in its programme. Educational process within the ambience of religion should also provide moral development and social sensitivity to the individual and community that ultimately would lead to nurture the human and divine values, commitments and healthy realizations in life. As a result, the religion will make man a mature human being who would remain as an inner-directed person and who would take the responsibility for his action and non-

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[12]Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, London: Harper & Row, 1959, 27.

[13]B. J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978, 319.

[14]Merleau-Ponty, "*La fin d'un philosophie est le récit de son commencement*," *The Visible and Invisible*, 231, cited in Remy C. Kwant, *From Phenomenology to Metaphysic: An Inquiry into the Last Period of Merleau-Ponty's Philosophical Life*, Pittsburg: Dunquesne University Press, 1966, 206.

action. According to Philip Phenix, "education is not a value-free process; nor does it seek to create a value-free context within which to engage in. The value-laden context of education derives from its intention to bring about changes in the way in which pupils understand themselves and the world; thus educational aims and objectives are, by nature, value-laden, they cannot be value-free or 'neutral' and remain educational."[15] Thus, educators have a noble vocation, a mission and a commitment to connect the individuals with knowledge, wisdom and noble ideals so that they may discover within them an ultimate design of their personal realization in life. It also facilitates the students to have a profound encounter with the divine so that they can frame a better significance for their own earthly existence. Educator's life is a vocation to live what one teaches so that the students may recognize the practicability of the transformative ideals of education within the scope of their lives and achievements.

What is most important in religion and education is the provision for a self-direction. Until one's faith and learning process contribute substantially for bringing up a rich behavioural transformation and self-direction both religion and education will remain inadequate and will lose their prime purpose in human life. The ultimate aim of the religion and education is their ability to offer an inner self-direction which is the real basis for higher growth and integration in each human person. In a famous bestseller book, *Tough Times Never Last, But Tough People Do*, Robert Schuller narrates about a young girl Carol Schuller who appeared on a Friday evening, to take part in the night of talent show, with her artificial leg which was attached just below the knee. This inspiring girl said to the audience: "If I have one talent, it is this: I can tell you that during that time (of accident and subsequent painful days) my faith became very real to me."[16] Then she said that she would like to sing a song about her friend, her Lord:

And He walks with me
And He talks with me
And He tells me I am His own

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[15]Philip Phenix, "Realms of Meaning," in Michael Grimmitt, *Religious Education and Human Development*, London: McCrimman Publishing Co. Ltd., 1987, 22.

[16]Robert H. Schuller, *Tough Times Never Last, But Tough People Do*, Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1988, 33-36.

And the joy we share in our time of prayer
None other has ever known.[17]

The faith that gave hope and expectation to this girl speaks the value of religion and religious education. Man's life even in the midst of great sorrow and distress will stay as a graceful gift if religion can whisper in one's consciousness the consoling presence of the divine. Education and its knowledge alone cannot contribute this comforting experience to the human soul but the divine light that shines forth in the inner recess of man can enlighten and heal the human mind. "We need to develop an inner structuring capacity for faith activity. Such structural growth is inextricably intervened with our maturation as human beings in the religious sphere."[18]

Man has marched from the forest to Moon! He has come forth from an age of bullock carts to jumbo jets, of parchments to computers, of olive oil to the transplantation of organs! Television, computer and other hi-tech electronic equipments make his vast world into a global-home. Our age is characterized by an enormous development of the human sciences. The human beings have an innate tendency to move toward higher levels of health, creativity, and self-fulfilment. They do influence very much our social relations and form a cultural texture for modern society. Our world will never be the same tomorrow with its new discoveries and researches.[19] All our attempts to grow explain the immense richness and potentialities of life which is a precious gift from God.[20] The document of Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes* states: "the achievements of the human race are a sign of God's greatness and the fulfilment of His mysterious design."[21] Greatness and development are intrinsic to man. The developmental psychologist Erik Erikson believes that individuals have unique capacities to create their own way of life and sense of personal meaning. He sees the human being as an evolving system; in each moment of life, the individual chooses between opposites and incorporates such opposites in order to create a new and unique life situation. In Erikson's theory, a person will

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[17]Schuller, *Tough Times Never Last, But Tough People Do*, 36.

[18]T. H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, New York: Harper San Francisco, 1980, 77.

[19]A. Amarnad, "In Search of New Symbols," *Premkiran* 1 (1992), 65.

[20]Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers Inc., 1970, xxxv.

[21]Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et spes*, 34.

have to struggle according to each stage to develop a sense of trust overcoming a sense of basic mistrust, a sense of autonomy while combating a sense of doubt and shame, a sense of initiative while overcoming a sense of guilt, a sense of industry while struggling to get out from a sense of inferiority, and a sense of identity while conquering a sense of identity diffusion.[22] When secular field of education is concerned only in the excellence in a particular branch of science, the human individual is in need of answering several other questions of life and finds himself in a confusing state. Excellence in a particular field does not provide the necessary guidance for life which becomes the ultimate value for the success or failure of a person in life. Life is not simply an awareness but it is all the more an attitude of growing. This growth presupposes integration of several dimensions and their matured balancing. Hence, when education segregates life from its curriculum, it diminishes itself from its absolute value in life. When it fails to view human life and its challenges as the most important ingredients, education becomes merely an intellectualism and professionalism. The after effect would be development of human beings devoid of heart-content and life direction.

7. Three Categories of Religion and Education

In the panorama of religious and educational experiences, we can discover three important trends. These are three types of approach to life and realities in the world. Man, in his tiresome search for meaning and direction in life, creates different types of outlooks. His attitude on religion and education is said to be the primary and fundamental dimension in promoting the meaning and direction in life.

7.1. Religion and Education for Domination and Manipulation

Religion and education, being two of the most important fundamentals in our societies, are sometimes used by some for domination and manipulation of their fellow beings. Having the membership in a particular religion, sometimes, adds the force and power to dominate over the minority communities. Here the principle employed is: might is power. It assumes that numerical power can amass all the right in a society.

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[22]E. H. Erikson, *Identity and Life Cycle*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1980; see also E. H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, New York: Harper & Row, 1950.

Whatever they do is considered as just, right, and acceptable and there is nothing that hinders their absolute autonomy and freedom. Certain classes within a particular religion feel that they are far superior to other members of their own religion. This superiority demands special respect and privilege from whole community. Coming to the field of education, we find that superiority in one's education does supply a kind of domination and manipulation in the society. The educated in the society control the uneducated, sometimes even violating the edges of justice and equality. The author remembers the days of humanitarian works done in the remote villages of Madhya Pradesh. One can find a permanency of slavery in the lives of villagers; father to son and son to other generations, all become slaves of the landlords. The so-called masters of the land do not allow any educational institute to appear in the vicinity of their villages. Once the sons and daughters of the poor villagers become literate, they would surely pose questions against their masters and, then, the centuries-long domination and manipulation will be vanished from the landlords. When education is used for manipulating the situations and overpowering the fellow human beings, it is a clear sign of its negative impact in the society. Religion and education are most sacred realms at the service of human beings, especially those who are oppressed, poor, and mistreated.

7.2. Religion and Education for Name's Sake

Can religion and education stay for mere name's sake? Yes! Religion for the name's sake ends up in superficial ceremonies, fake demonstrations of piety and ritualism. There is no spirit that works for transformation of the individual but he/she carries a feeble logic of pragmatism for his/her performance. Religion becomes a show for fame and recognition. The political parties and their leaders sometimes use religion to generate political patronage and to create a more stable political support-base. Here the mentors want religions to contribute towards their future political prospects.

A religion that does not convert and sets challenging questions in front of individuals for the betterment of their lives, is not a real religion; it will merely remain as a peripheral belief system with a set of meaningless rituals. Education can also fall into the same trap of pragmatism. Education for education's sake is not aimed at the growth and development of the individual and society but will exist only for

individual's prominence and forged superiority. Use and abuse of religion and education can happen when they are exercised for the name's sake.

7.3. Religion and Education for Liberation and Wellbeing

The true significance of a religion and education comes into view when both these dimensions are employed for the sake of individual's liberation, wellbeing and internal happiness. Every religion is a path of perfection and inner bliss because it essentially transforms the person and adds dignity and refinement in him. When religion is used for self purification, it bestows to the individual an inner energy that can bring wellbeing to himself and to the society. Religions stay for harmony and unity. Real religions bring forth solidarity and social sensitivity. In the wake of natural calamities, sickness, and disasters, true followers of religion march for extending timely help and assistance. Religion stays here for the true wellbeing of all human beings. Religion is the source and inspiration for the individual as well as to the society to obtain eternal salvation and liberty to fellow human beings. Education is equally employed for the sake of liberation and wellbeing of oneself and the society. Studies in medical science or psychology, philosophy or theology, or any other branch of knowledge can be used for healing oneself and others. Every good knowledge guides to liberation: liberation from the darkness of ignorance to the light of health and healing, salvation and wellbeing. Education is meant for liberating individuals and the society. When religion and education join hand in hand with each other we can expect a noble growth in humanity.

8. Conclusion

Carl Rogers believes that unless individuals, groups and nations can imagine, construct, and creatively revise new ways of relating to the complex changes, the light will go out. Unless man can make new and original adaptations to his environment as rapidly as his science can change the environment, human cultures will perish.[23] By the help of religion and education we can visualize a more confident morrow. We look forward a brighter future when we learn to synergize our religion and education for life, for the noble growth of individual and society. In this

[23]Carl R. Rogers, "Towards a Theory of Creativity," *ETC: A Review of General Semantics* 2 (1954), 250.

third millennium, when humans are privileged to have the abundance of knowledge and wisdom, they need to discover the pitfalls that have followed in their stages of development. By incorporating the dimensions of religion and education they need to correct all drawbacks in order to support further matured and dignified growth in life. Religion should not be shrouded with selfishness of man so too the education should not be affected by the greed for money and comforts. The individual and society must walk with confidence with the self-directing grace of religion and liberating light of education. The religion and education must serve the life of man, to have life, life in its abundance.

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PASTORAL VISION ON EDUCATION
Foresight of an Educationist, Kuriakose Elias Chavara

Sunny Punneliparambil♦

1. Introduction

Man shares in the light of God's mind. He is justified in considering himself as an intellectual being who is superior to the material world around him, as he always searches for fundamental truths. He realizes his true and full human potential, by cultivating the gifts and values of his nature, and thus acquiring a high degree of culture. In the life of man culture and nature are closely interrelated. He has co-responsibility with his fellow human beings and the society at large. This co-responsibility is evolved through certain basic human values. This value system is evolved in the society as well as in the human being through the processes of education. Education should act as a powerful agent of liberation of the individual as well as the society. It must liberate the creative potentialities of human consciousness. Through educational processes we should aim the integral wellbeing of the humankind, by contributing to the development of true human culture.

Education is as old as human consciousness. It is a human activity. There are three dimensions in the process of education. They are, "already," "being realized," and the "not yet." These dimensions should not be separated but should be integrated. The "already" dimension is expressive of either what the learner already knows or what the educator knows and the learner has the inner capacity to consciously appropriate. The second dimension, a "present process being realized," emphasizes not what is there already, but what is being discovered by the learner as it comes to meet him or her from beyond present limitations. Here, the experiences from the present moments are more important. The third dimension, "not yet," refers to the point toward which the leading out is done. To lead out is an activity directed towards the future, towards the horizons beyond one's present limits and the not yet realized. This future

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dimension is a transcendent aspect of educational activity; it enables people to transcend what they are to become what they are not yet, but potentially can be. It should lead him or her to a new future.

The overall aim of education is to enable people to appropriate the human values and to existentially respond to the call of their co-responsibility within the community in order to promote social transformation: through enhancing freedom, justice, and peace, making accessible knowing and loving God, and fostering human emergence, wholeness, and fulfilment.[1] Education has great significance in the formation of conscience and in the moral development of the human person. Man has the responsibility to become perfect and to help others to become perfect. So, as we attain the ultimate levels of perfection and integrity, we become the glory of God.

In the process of education, teachers should be professionally equipped and their life should be a model to the students and their skills and various apparatus should be updated according to the need of the time and circumstances. The priority must be given to the value based system of education. Kuriakose Elias Chavara,[2] the co-founder of Carmelites of Mary Immaculate was a man who, having taken the original aim and goal of education to his heart, had pioneered a relentless effort of educating the masses in Kerala, the southern-most state of India. Education should enable everyone to take part in the mainstream social and cultural life of the land by imbibing a sense of equality and social equity. This was the noble vision behind the efforts of Chavara. Indeed, his vision on education was an integral one. Education should enable all to assume various roles of responsible citizens in the community. It should help them to develop scientific outlook and attitudes making them aware of their rights and responsibilities. It should explore the dignity of the human person without any discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, creed, and culture. It should promote imparting knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, which

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[1]D. S. Schipani, *Religious Education Encounters Liberation Theology*, Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1988, 192.

[2]Kuriakose Elias Chavara is the first person to be declared Blessed from the Syro-Malabar Church. He is the co-founder of two indigenous religious congregations: one for men named Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI), and another for women, Congregation of Mother Carmel (CMC). He considered the spiritual renovator of the Syro-Malabar Church and a visionary for the Kerala Society in the 19th century.

would enable them to contribute to the productive programme of the national developmental efforts. It should also have the capacity to sensitize them to the ethical, social, and cultural values which are essential in building up an enlightened nation.

2. Chavara and the Apostolate of Education

Chavara was a man who, one hundred years before the independence of India, integrated his faith dimension with the cultural heritage of Kerala and acted according to the need of the time to ensure the equality of all irrespective of caste, creed, and sex. At a time when the vast majority of the people in Kerala were denied access to any kind of education, he emphasized the need of having a Catholic Sanskrit school, where children from any religion could pursue their studies. Further, by issuing a landmark directive that schools be attached to all Catholic churches and monasteries (houses of religious life) in Kerala, he made education an integral part of his commitment to the Christian way of living. He could realize that only through education the barriers among castes, religions, and cultures could be eliminated. So, he deserves to be called "the pioneer of intellectual renaissance" of India, especially Kerala.

2.1. Educational Situation of the Catholics at the Time of Chavara

Before we come to Chavara's educational activities, a look at the educational standard of the Catholic community of the then Kerala (Malabar) seems to be necessary to understand the path-breaking educational vision and foresight. Even in the 19th century facilities for public education were very meagre in the Travancore-Cochin part of Malabar. As a result of colonization of India by the British, the Anglican Missionaries had started mission among Jacobites. From 1816, these missionaries began to establish English schools in various parts of the country. The Catholics were prohibited to attend these schools. They were almost forbidden to study English.[3] The first Catholic English medium school was started only in the year 1885. The ecclesiastical authorities of that time viewed with suspicion the learning of English, as they feared that it would bring with it the influence of the Protestant doctrine. But the knowledge of English was means to obtain government jobs and was

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[3]Valerian, *The Servant of God, Fr. Cyriac Elias Chavara*, Kottayam: Deepika Press, 1953, 136.

considered a sign of being cultured. The government of Travancore-Cochin also began to provide more public schools; but they were very insufficient to meet the need of the public. In these circumstances, the Catholic community had less opportunities for public education compared to other communities like Jacobites, Hindus, etc.

2.2. Contributions of Chavara in the Field of Education

Chavara could recognize the backwardness of his community in the field of education. He knew that a community without education would remain undeveloped and progress would be almost impossible. Moreover, he perceived that education was one of the best means to give Christian formation to the children and to teach them the principles of Catholic faith.[4] This conviction compelled him to initiate efforts in the field of education for the betterment of human society. So, in 1846 he started a Sanskrit School at Mannanam, adjoined to the first Monastery. A scholar in Malayalam and Sanskrit from Trichur was appointed to instruct the students. Apart from students coming from different communities, priests and seminarians also attended the school. It is said that Chavara had suggested that each parish should send a student in every year to this school at its own expense.[5] Later, in 1864, a perceptive instruction came from Chavara, as the Vicar General of the Syrians in the Diocese of Verapoly, to start a school adjacent to every parish church. It was a prophetic action triggering a great social change in the society of Kerala. His earnestness and insistence could be seen in even sending a communication to all parishes intimidating the parish priests that they would be penalized if they did not implement the order.

Chavara took special initiative for the education of the Dalits. He insisted that the school should admit the children of Dalits and that there should not be any discrimination against them. He encouraged these children by giving them special assistance, such as books and dress. In order to help Dalits to send their children to school Chavara introduced midday meal for these children by taking contribution from the general public. We have to remember that this was done at a time when even in

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[4]Joseph Kanjiramattathil, *The Pastoral Vision of Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1986, 75.

[5]P. T. Thomas, *Karmayogi* (Malayalam), Ernakulam: St. Joseph Publication, 1956, 146.

government schools admission was denied to children from low caste and Ḍalit communities.[6] He strongly believed that education is a source of power and a strong means of empowering a person as well as liberating the society at large. In his last testament Chavara has emphasised the importance of a thorough educative process: "When children reach the age of discretion, they should be sent to school. Moreover, it is to be checked whether they are studying properly. On Sundays what they had studied during the previous week is to be examined."[7]

More than one hundred and fifty years ago Chavara had such a great vision on education in the Indian society. He acted with extraordinary courage to meet the challenges of his time. By founding two religious congregations and giving instruction about starting schools attached to every Catholic parish church in Kerala, he was bequeathing his vision for all times to come and was entrusting the Catholic Church in India, and the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate and the Congregation of Mother Carmel, in particular, the great responsibility of building up the society to meet the challenges of life. By imparting the integral and person-oriented education his followers should give expression to the mind and vision of their founder. Following his vision, various Christian educational institutions should strive hard to equip and enable people to live with human dignity and mutual respect for one another.

It is the vision of Chavara that any Catholic educational institution in India should prove to be not just a guide but an inspiration and a challenge to other schools and colleges, their staff, students, and managements. By fulfilling their mission as Catholic educational institutions, they will achieve a universal presence of the Christian mind in the whole enterprise of advancing higher culture and their students will become men and women truly outstanding in learning, ready to shoulder society's heavier burdens and witness the real faith to the world.

Chavara was not only the founder of the educational institutions in Kerala but also he was an educationist. The Kerala government declared that Kerala state is 100% literate. Without any doubt we can say that the initial spark behind this marvellous achievement is none other than Chavara. Indeed, he was a trendsetter, a man who made a difference in his

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[6]T. Panthaplackal, *A Pearl Truly Indian*, Ernakulam: The Postulator General for the Cause of Blessed Chavara, 2005, 78.

[7]Chavara, *The Letters*, CWC, 4: 113.

time by taking bold decisions and practical and creative initiatives. He was an intellectual renaissance leader who walked ahead of his time.[8]

3. Values in Education

When we analyse the motivation behind the educational interest of Chavara we realize that the integral growth of the personality is his primary concern. This is only possible through a well organized value system in the life of a person. This integrity must be touched in all the levels of human development. The entire humanity is considered as one in God and everybody should enjoy the bond of love and equality. Chavara adopted the policy of "education to all" as the best possible means to lead the entire nation towards prosperity. For Chavara education is powerful than any other means to bring real integrity to the society.

Today we live in a world of consumerism. Education provides the nurturing ground for an individual's holistic development so as to make effective contribution to the society in a dynamic environment guided by the core values, such as faith in God, moral uprightness, love of fellow beings, social responsibility, and pursuit of excellence. But today everything is seen through the eyes of marketing and profit. The power concept of education has been changed into money concept. The concept of personal and national integrity gives the way to professionalism and individualism.

Education for values is a more challenging activity because it deals with the education of being that leads further to the education beyond consciousness. The values from philosophical, psychological, and sociological perspectives encompass the whole spectrum of human efflorescence in terms of ascent and excellence. It enables one to synchronize all the essence and excellence desirable for advancement of learning and the march of human beings towards truth, goodness, and beauty. From a philosophical perspective, education for values is education of the being best harmonized in terms of education for having and loving. As John Paul II insists in *veritatis Splendor*, the only credible way to profess our faith is in the way we live our lives. This task should be actualized by the Church through her Christian education. The primary aim is not to make man a member of the Church, but to make him a Christian with values by which one can live as another Christ in this

[8]Panthaplackal, *A Pearl Truly Indian*, 73.

Challenging modern world. So various structural divisions, such as dioceses, parishes, families, schools, and catechetical centres should give leadership to empower human persons in becoming integral persons who can contribute their abilities for the well-being of the entire humanity. This is the vision of Chavara on education. It should promote oneness among the people. We are growing together, celebrating together, learning together, acting together, and believing together. So the Christian education should be capable of instilling the atmosphere of peace and harmony among the people. Through the establishment of schools along with parishes Chavara dreamed that the education should bring all the people to the mainstream of social life with an integral value system.

3.1. Values in Education from a Philosophical Perspective

Essential components of values are to be spelt out in terms of education of the highest order, which definitely directs our attention to education for self-interpretation and self-development. As education of values can be caught and can hardly be taught, value-education demands and depends on the education of the heart side-by-side with education of the head. In this respect, the role of the teacher is to ignite the students in exploring, enriching, and expressing auto-values best suited to the ascent and excellence of self and society.[9]

Education for values for the individual as well as for the society has a long way to tread for real advancement of learning. It has to consider the individual learner as a conscious and careful interpreter of whatever is true, good, and beautiful in the context of self and society. Value education should, therefore, be closely linked with value aesthetics, which, again, can only be caught and can hardly be taught. Education for values primarily demands an inquisitive search for the true concept and role of the self. From this philosophical dimension, the components associated with education for values are poignant enough to explore and re-explore the self from positive and negative aspects of development. The role of education in understanding and appreciating the self in relation to others and the Divine Self itself encapsulates the essence of values. The learner must identify within himself the positive values that lead him to re-crystallize his vision of fullness, and the negative ones standing in the way of his

[9]M. Chakrabarthi, *Value Education*, New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 1997, 2.

advancement. He must explore and examine each value concept in terms of truth, goodness, and beauty.

Education for values also encompasses other finer zones of development of personality. Of these, love plays a prominent role especially in relation to values that are concerned with a certain sense of delicate and sustained development of emotion. In fact, the education of love as an emotional value component is very often ignored and relegated simply because it is more prone to be misunderstood and misrepresented than to be well-adored for highlighting it as an unparalleled and pioneering value component. The essence of love is the essence of education awaiting dissemination in life and service to mankind. Therefore, the students especially in the secondary schools should be oriented in the education of love – the education that guarantees an ideal value-exercise and value-exposure both from individualistic and socialistic points of view.

Failures of the students in the arena of learning have, in most recent cases, been wrongly interpreted. It is often interpreted in terms of absence of human potentialities, which lead to hatred of the self. This becomes worse in embracing self-annihilation, which defies all good sense of values in education. Added to the failures are other emotional components like anxiety, fear, frustration, and anger, which tarnish the bright prospects of values in education.[10] The components that indicate moral responsibilities, namely respect, obedience, courage, purity of thought and action, etc., are essential elements in value education. The value components ensure the challenges of education for bringing about a silent but sound revolution against passivity and alienation in education. The choice of social responsibilities leads us to appreciate the value components in the society. The values such as sympathy, kindness, co-operation, altruistic qualities of head and heart and the antagonistic components come under the canvas of education of values. The core of education for values lies in self-esteem and self-identity. Man, to be man, cannot but be reborn in revolution of values. Education for values, then definitely deserves to be serenely and successfully geared to that purpose. The arena of human failures or ignorance in assessing self-identity and self-development necessitates a rediscovery in terms of lost values in education, which must be regained.

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[10]Chakrabarthi, *Value Education*, 6.

3.2. Values in Education from a Psychological Perspective

The education for values related to habit-formation of students necessitates a newer emphasis in bringing about a psychological change amongst learners. They should be trained in the process of practising good habits and eliminating evil ones by an appropriate approach to real life situation. The practice of the value of goodness as a form of habit has its threefold purpose. First, it allows the learner to practise it bearing all the time in mind that there must be an awakening of the excellence of individuality in him; second, this excellence of individuality should, as a basic principle of value-exposition, be geared to the awakening of mass excellence in the society. Third, as a pre-condition to safety of values in the individual as well as the social framework, the bad or evil propensities standing in the way of manifestation of goodness in habit-formation should be carefully and judiciously arrested and oriented to chanelize these to the mainstream of individual and social advancement. According to Benjamin Franklin, there are thirteen virtues or values in the psychological perspective of the value for education. They are: temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquillity, chastity, and humility.[11]

3.3. Values in Education from a Sociological Perspective

If education is directed towards the sociological perspective of values, it serves the following fivefold purpose:

1. Education not only remains satisfied with the advancement of learning but also positively ensures enkindling of the self for service towards others as best as possible.
2. Education becomes a communicated pursuit towards exploring and translating the essence of values best needed for the individual and society.
3. The world of the learner in terms of education for values is expanded. He enjoys the freedom in negotiating and appreciating social values side by side with his own values cherished in isolation.
4. A certain sense of heightening and enriching social sensibilities in terms of value excellence becomes an enviable reality.

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[11]Chakrabarthi, *Value Education*, 25.

5. Education for the social ascent of man is geared through exercise of value-items both individually and in groups as a common social endeavour.

To establish a new world order of compassion, peace, justice, and security, it is essential that the mankind frees itself from the limitations of national prejudice and acknowledges that the forces that unite it are incomparably deeper and stronger than those that divide it – that all people are part of the one global community, dependent on one body of resources, bounded together by the ties of a common humanity, and associated in a common adventure on the planet earth. All, then, have to join together to vindicate and realize this great truth that mankind is one and, as one, will nobly save or irreparably lose the heritage of thousands of years of civilization. This calls for setting forth the principles, which would animate and inspire us if human civilization is to survive.

The essence of education for values from social dimensions necessitates an inward approach along with the outward one which ought to spell out the most vulnerable value components related to advancement of the individual self and the social one well-coordinated and well-balanced every time everywhere. Those value-components in terms of practice and poignancy are the following: mutual respectability, admitting errors and omission of work-ethics, the right use of time, discipline, and exercise of the appropriate sense of admiration or disapproval.

3.4. Values in Education from a Religious Perspective

When we read the "Last Testament of a Loving Father," written by Chavara, we see that he is advising the people to have a strict adherence to value system in the religious, social, and moral dimensions of life. The entire life of a man must be touched by the process of education. The relationship of man with God, nature and fellow human being is treated in this works of Chavara. The commitment of a person to his family, society, and to oneself is also discussed here. The process of education must give nine important values to bring a human person to his perfection and integrity. They are:

1. Recognizing one's dignity as human person, created in the image and likeness of God, loved by God and invited to respond to his love. Here the value is the giftedness of human person's ability to relate to God.
2. Respecting the sacredness of the gift of human languages, enabling one to speak of what is most deep and precious in life – the very mystery of

God himself, as well as the deepest mysteries of the human person and the rest of God's Creation. The value is the giftedness of human person's ability to know God.

3. The giftedness of human person's ability to encounter God in the ritual and communion.
4. Recognizing that one receives oneself as gift from the parents, a gift to be shared gratefully and lovingly with others – within the family and the society at large. The value is the goodness of family and social relationship.
5. Respecting our giftedness and responsibility as embodied persons, endowed with life to be respected and health to be cared for. It brings the goodness of life and health.
6. Respecting our giftedness and responsibility as sexual persons, endowed with the capacity for faithful and life-giving loving relationship. The value we have to create here is the goodness of human sexuality, enabling us to share life and love.
7. The goodness of living together in interdependence in society, respectful of integrity of the rest of God's creation.
8. It should bring the ability to see the goodness of truth and beauty and the human pursuit of both.
9. It should create the value of goodness or blessedness of purity of heart.[12]

3.5. Values from a Moral and Integral Perspective

A good society enlivens the spirit of goodness in every individual. Unless education caters to this objective of goodness, it fails to nurture good citizens. The educational system must aim at an international understanding. The Indian educational systems have a thrust on developing an international outlook: "*mata bhoomihi putro aham prithivya*," meaning "the whole world is our motherland and, we are all children of the earth."[13] In very real sense, therefore, patriotism is not enough, and it must be supplemented by a lively realization of the fact that we are all members of one world and must be prepared mentally and emotionally to discharge the responsibilities, which such a membership

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[12]K. T. Kelly, *From a Parish Base*, Wiltshire: Longman and Todd Ltd., 1999, 141-143.

[13]Aggarwal, *Teacher and Education in a Developing Society*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1995, 506.

implies. So, education shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups. As S. Radhakrishnan has rightly stated, "there is nothing national with regard to education. The different countries are provinces of a common republic of culture. There is no such thing as proletarian mathematics or Nazi chemistry or Jewish physics. Culture is international and science is cosmopolitan in its essence and reality."[14]

We have to lay special stress on the teaching of moral and spiritual values. Moral values particularly refer to the conduct of man toward man in the various situations in which beings come together. The Indian National Policy on Education (1986) strongly emphasizes that the curriculum should be readjusted in such a way as to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of moral, social, and religious values. "Psychology of the Child and Curriculum," published by NCERT in 1983, has listed the following important moral qualities, which need to be developed in children: honesty in words and deeds, truthfulness, self-respect and desire to respect others, righteousness, self-control, duty consciousness, and compassion.

The moral developmental behaviour, which relates to honesty, integrity, truthfulness, righteousness, and self-control including right attitude to sex, is that which concerns our moral life. However, the gradual erosion of moral and social values is so deep-rooted in our economic, political, social, and religious life. This poses an imperative to try to plan for a clean life, clean politics, and clean administration as the need of the hour. Through value-oriented education we must try to acquire the power to empower the society for a healthy humanity, for education is power, and not money. Education is not meant for business but it is a service to the entire humanity. Gandhi, for example, envisages education as a means of self-realization, the attainment of truth, and the all round development of the individuals. The ideal education involves both cultivation of spirit and development of mind and body. Education, therefore, is a key for shaking off the yoke of alien cultures, and to orient humanity for a creative response to life and society: for attaining autonomy (*Swaraj*) and the holistic development of all (*Sarvodaya*). This is in tune with the aim of education that Chavara propagated in the 19th century. Education, for him, was the mighty too to bring the low caste people to the mainstream of life.

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[14]Aggarwal, *Teacher and Education in a Developing Society*, 508.

By establishing a Sanskrit school at Mannanam (Kerala) for the public, he enabled many to shake off the yoke of discrimination of caste and creed.

4. Conclusion

Chavara was a man of great visions and initiatives. Through the educational revolution he was trying to bring harmony in the social as well as in the cultural fields. By offering education to all he was empowering the society with esteem and integrity. So, education is a process of leading the humankind to enlightenment; further, it is the most formidable tool for survival. That is, intellectual growth and economic achievements alone cannot be the criteria for an effective education; it should also include emotional maturity, social and cultural unification, and ethical awareness. Thus, education is incomplete without the formation of critical and creative habits. Also, it is to be understood that without vocational skills and technological efficiency, education tends to be an exercise in contemplation and abstraction. The purpose of education is not only to contribute to the continuity of culture, but also to change peacefully and rationally the material foundations of civilization. It must help all in the development of the spiritual, moral, mental, and physical wellbeing. This must bring forth the ability to understand and adjust themselves to the people and life in the community. It must enable them to develop a constructive attitude of responsibility to the family, town, nation, and the world at large.

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Book Reviews

Sebastian Athappilly, *Theology in India: Essays on Christ, Church and Eucharist*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2005, pages 280, ISBN: 81-86861-76-9.

Theology in India is a significant, scholarly and substantial volume on Christ, Church, and Eucharist, by Sebastian Athappilly. The primary focus of the author in this volume is to establish and extol Jesus Christ as the unique and universal mediator of salvation.

The title, *Theology in India*, "intends to convey the idea that the articles are primarily against the background of the present Indian scenario of theological, liturgical, religious and socio-political discussions and debates" (22). In his theological investigation and interpretation, the basic guiding principle of Athappilly is as follows: "faith is truth, not because it is my faith, but because it is my faith" (22). While the author criticises the uncritical approach of certain authors in the name of inter-religious dialogue, he is sincerely and seriously committed to it, provided it is understood properly: "this does not mean that we can advocate a plurality or parallelism of economies of salvation, for God is one, so too his history of encounter with humanity. We constitute one family in so far as we are created and interrelated in Christ in the single economy of salvation" (23). The author rightly and consistently holds the view that rather than speaking of an Indian Church "we can speak of Oriental, Syro-Malabar, Latin, Syro-Malankara, and Orthodox Churches in India. It is also in this sense that we think of theology *in* India" (23).

"The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the Plurality of Religions," the first and key article in this volume, presents the central concerns of the author. He challenges the authors who compromise or reject the corner stone of the faith of Christians, that is, the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in the name of inter-religious dialogue and religious plurality. This lengthy article, mapping one third of the volume, that is, pages 25-98, is a clear sign of the erudite scholarship, enlightening arguments, excelling clarity, intellectual honesty, logical consistency, and true humility of the author and the zeal of a Christian missionary concerning the conviction of and commitment to Jesus Christ, unique and universal mediator of salvation.

The first article of the book invites the readers to the core of Christian faith, which is "not merely sharing and professing the faith *of* Jesus Christ, but essentially faith *in* him" (25). The author sincerely and seriously holds that the faith in Jesus as the unique mediator of salvation is the "very core of Christian faith" (26). He is of the conviction that "it is against Christian faith and theology to reduce Jesus Christ into just *one* of the many saviours or incarnations" (26). Without denying the role and value of any religious figure and, at the same time, without compromising the truth of salvation, the author has this to state: "When we speak of Jesus Christ as the only Saviour, we focus on his role as the only ultimate mediator of salvation of and from God" (27). Though we can and may *distinguish* between Jesus and Christ, it "does not mean that we *separate* the Christ from Jesus or vice versa, for Jesus and the Christ are personally the same one" (30). Criticising the 'relativization strategy', Athappilly argues: "Faith does not distinguish 'truth for me' and 'truth for others'; if something is true, it is true and valid for me and *all*" (32). He examines the witness of Scripture and Tradition and establishes the truth of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in salvation (33-60). The author conducts an interesting and important tour through the woods of Scripture, Fathers of the Church, contemporary theologians, and the magisterial teachings to highlight the deposit of faith in Jesus Christ. In the following section, he picks up some authors, like, John Hick, Raymon Panickkar, Paul F. Knitter, and criticises their tendency: "It is not necessary to sacrifice the uniqueness of Christ as *the* unique saviour at the altar of dialogue for the sake of a pluralistic co-relational theology of religions" (73).

Upholding the Christian claim of Jesus Christ as the one ultimate mediator of salvation, Athappilly brings into focus the temptation of many authors "to water down the claim" in the false perception of pleasing all (6). He makes the fundamental requirement for a genuine inter-religious dialogue. It is "possible only between persons who are committed to their respective religious faiths; hence it is wrong to think that committed statements of one's faith will hinder dialogue" (79). The author cleverly and convincingly brings to light the emptiness of the authors who are not convinced of or committed to their faith: "the partners discuss not their faith convictions or religious truths, rather they bracket out their faith and then discuss as though no one has found any truth" (85). Refuting the unfounded allegations of 'boastful hybris' levelled against the Christian

claim, the author discloses the personality claim of Jesus to be "his ultimate kenosis" (93). According to the author, the proper mindset of a Christian should "be tolerant, humble and yet firm towards all non-Christian religions" (97).

Consistently, the author argues that "the other mediators share in Christ's mediatory efficacy and do not offer a salvation bypassing him" (97). Emphasising the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, the article highlights that "there is, was and can be no comparable claim of uniqueness for any person as that for Jesus Christ, for no one else has really claimed and been claimed as God Incarnate in the real sense; no one else also has been confirmed in this claim" (97). Showing the baseless and pointless argument of those who sacrifice the uniqueness of Christ, Athappilly gives a warning: "By sacrificing the uniqueness of Jesus Christ at the altar of inter-religious dialogue a theologian may eliminate a scandal or stumbling block of Christian faith; but he will be building his theological edifice without the corner stone and the foundation that God himself has laid" (98). Encouraging the Christians and their faith in Christ, the author presents the pattern of Saint Paul in preaching the Christ crucified: "The stumbling block of the uniqueness of Christ may similarly turn into a stepping stone in the service of truth and salvation to many" (98).

The second article, "The Affective and Affectionate Dimension of the Syro-Malabar *Qurbana*," is a testimony of personal appreciation and conversion of the author to the celebration of the *Qurabana*, the Eucharist. "Theological Dimensions of the Anaphora of Mar Addai and Mari," explores the Trinitarian, theo-logical, Christo-logical, pneumato-logical, liturgio-logical, proto-logical, and Eschato-logical dimensions in the anaphora. The anaphora "entails the grateful *anamnesis* (commemorative representation) of the entire Paschal Mystery of Christ, especially the celebration of his death and resurrection in view (hope) of his second coming" (148). The author successfully illustrates the liturgy as an important source of theology and highlights the basic and significant tenets of the Catholic faith in the anaphora and it "signifies and celebrates the various phases of the dispensation of salvation, beginning with Creation, through the redemptive work of the Paschal Mystery, culminating in the sending of the Holy Spirit, and anticipates the eschatological fulfilment" (149). In a similar vein, the article on "The Theological Anthropology of the Syro-Malabar *Qurbana*" is an exploration of the significance of the liturgy in displaying the theological content. The Eucharistic liturgy bears

witness to the "holistic and cosmic vision in Trinitarian, Christological and anthropological perspective" (184).

The next article, "Is Christian Revelation Theo-centric or Christo-centric?" is a theological investigation into the core of Christian faith. Having analysed different sources and studies, the author arrives at a synthesis: "Christian revelation is Theo-centric, with its specific trait on Christo-centrism. It is Theo-centric in its Christo-centrism and vice versa" (200). In "Universal Magisterium and Reception in the Local Church: An Oriental Perspective," Sebastian Athappilly observes that "the Orientals in general do not approach the issue from a purely rationalistic point of view, rather spiritually and without much ado about the distinction related to the type of assent to be accorded to each magisterial pronouncement" (227). The author explains the three types of the doctrines according to the new formula of the Profession of Faith, requiring types of assent of the faithful. Nevertheless, the author makes it abundantly clear that the Oriental mentality "is not so much a juridical act of acceptance as it is an ongoing spiritual process in the life of the Church" (228). The article on "The Special Synod for Asia: Story of a Pastoral Voyage" is a personal appreciation on the celebration of the historical synod held in Rome, to which the author also was invited to participate as an *adiutor*.

"Jesus Christ Needs No Life Certificate from Sita Ram Goel" is a rational response to the book entitled *Jesus Christ: An Artifice for Aggression*, written by Sita Ram Goel. The following comment on the book illustrate the mind of Prof. Athappilly: "unscholarly, selective approach and its preconceived and forced conclusions betrays the causes that have given birth to it, namely, feelings of hatred and antagonism against Christianity" (238). At the outset, the author attacks the mindset of Goel: "The author is really (but necessarily) worried about the positive approach of the many open minded Hindus towards Jesus" (238). This article challenges the arguments of Sita Ram Goel one after another. By way of counter arguments, the author establishes that Jesus of the New Testament is not a man of aggression, but a humble and meek person who instructs the disciples not to resist even the one who is evil, but to love the enemies (255). He also rightly points to the tradition of Thomas Christians of India and their legacy of co-existence and cooperation with the Hindus and Moslems of the locality (255). At the same time, the author invites the Christians to make a self criticism on present trends "of an undue and exaggerated Westernization" (257). The article "Is John

Hick a *Theologian* of Religion(s)?" was originally a book review published in the *Journal of Dharma* on D. Cheetham's book, *John Hick: A Critical Introduction and Reflectio*n (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003). The overall impression about Hick's works, according to our author, "is that they are not of a *theological* nature, for he is not operating with theological tools, but purely philosophical ones" (259).

Theology in India is an enlightening, empowering, and enriching reading on (1) Christ, the unique and universal mediator of salvation, (2) Church, the sign of salvation in the world, and (3) Eucharist, the celebration of the history of salvation and the mystery of Christ. Though the author deals with fundamental and subtle issues concerning Christian revelation and response, it is an interesting, important, and illustrative work, which must be read by all the faithful and all others who would like to know Jesus Christ and Christianity in truth and depth.

Hence, Sebastian Athappilly deserves our recognition and appreciation for his intellectual pursuit and integral approach in interpreting the faith about the truth of Christ, Church, and Eucharist in a manner logically consistent, theologically sound, and officially right.

Paulachan Kochappilly

Kuncheria Pathil, *Theology of the Church: New Horizons*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2006, pages 230, ISBN: 81-86861-90-4.

India has been called the ideal "testing ground" for the application of the documents of Vatican Council II. The rich and multifarious Indian context provides opportunities for the application of practically all the documents of Vatican Council II, which have the Church as their focal point. This is a point amply illustrated by the book under consideration.

The book, *Theology of the Church: New Horizons*, by Kuncheria Pathil is a welcome addition to the rather scanty literature available in the sector of Indian ecclesiology. Pathil, a former president of the Indian Theological Association (ITA) and *peritus* of the Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), is undoubtedly one of the foremost ecclesiologists in the contemporary Indian scenario. The book in question comprises a series of articles written by the author in the course of years, on various occasions such as the Colloquium between Bishops and Theologians. These articles touch on all sectors of ecclesiology as the titles themselves indicate: (1) *The Communion of Churches in the Early*

Centuries and the Development of Primatial Structures, (2) *Vatican II and the Paradigm Shift in the Theology of the Church*, (3) *The Self-Understanding of the Church in India Today*, (4) *Towards a Theology of the Local Church*, (5) *Vatican II and Theology of the Laity*, (6) *Magisterium and Sensus Fidelium in the Interpretation of Revelation and Faith*, (7) *Inter-Ecclesial Relations in India*, (8) *Infallibility Debate Revisited*, (9) *Basic Christian Communities: New Ecclesial Models*, and (10) *Signs of Hope*.

Obviously, the articles in this collection are of a disparate nature: some tend to be explanatory; some investigative; others are contextual and yet others constitute an attempt at trail-blazing. Consequently, on the part of the reader, these articles may, likewise, elicit varied reactions: from ready acceptance to a more reflective stance which would like to gauge some of the implications; or even an attitude of challenge! Nevertheless, underlying all these, certain elements transpire clearly: the author has a deep sense of loyalty to the Church; he has a thorough knowledge of the documents of Vatican Council II; he is profoundly rooted in the ecclesial tradition to which he belongs, viz., the Syro-Malabar tradition; and he manifests a deep sense of communion with the Universal Church.

Dominic Veliath

Anand Veeraraj, *Green History of Religion*, Bangalore: Centre for Contemporary Christianity, 2006.

This is a truly groundbreaking book! Despite all our talk of overcoming dualism, our historical and systematic accounts of the history of religion rarely take the relation of human beings and their natural environment seriously into account. Veeraraj devotes several chapters to recent interpretations of what Jaspers calls the "Axial Age" to show how oblivious most of them are to the natural world. I myself certainly ignored nature in my account until I was educated by Veeraraj through working with him on his dissertation. That experience was revelatory for me. This book is a further outcome of the research he did for his dissertation.

Taking the changing relation of human beings to their natural environment into account deeply transforms the understanding of the history of religion. Veeraraj does not merely note that all the axial or higher religions express alienation from nature; he provides a rich historical analysis of why this is so. Focusing on Mesopotamia, he traces

the changing experience of the natural context from hunters and gatherers, through archaic agrarians and the first cities, to the rise of imperialism in the context of which the axial religions were born. Objectively, the relation to nature changed, and subjectively this was registered in religious sensibility and doctrine. Once this is pointed out, it is hard to question.

A green history requires the author to draw on many fields of knowledge. Veeraraj had done so responsibly, although he could claim no expertise in most of them. Breaking ground in this way invites the participation of many with greater specialized knowledge in such fields as the history of climate change and its effects on population movements and agriculture. No doubt the details of his history will need revision as research continues, but I suspect that the basic account and the associated theses will survive criticism. Whether they will be internalized by students of religion in this deeply dualistic culture remains to be seen. I hope that scholars influenced by process thought will not be resistant to greening their historical perspective.

At one point Veeraraj was inclined to blame the axial religions, especially Christianity, for the degradation of the Earth. The picture he now gives is more nuanced. The alienation of human beings from nature was caused, not by the axial religions, but by the actual human condition under imperial rule. The axial religions reflected this alienation and even transmitted it to peoples whose historical situation was different. The role of these religions, including Christianity, has thus been destructive in relation to the natural environment. Nevertheless, Veeraraj appreciates their positive contributions to human self-understanding and morality and that they also contain and can develop a different understanding of the natural world. It is their transformation, and not their destruction, for which he now calls.

One of the many suggestive ideas he develops is that Egyptian religion, despite its imperial context, expressed a much more positive relation to nature. He sees this as resulting from the behaviour of the Nile which annually renewed the land. The Egyptian experience was very different from that in Mesopotamia, where irrigation required immense labour and, over time, resulted in diminishing yields.

This difference of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian experience points to the need for far more work. Veeraraj has truly broken new ground. The project has been well begun, but there is much more to do. Although Veeraraj is an Indian and his book is published in India, he does not

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